NEA Today

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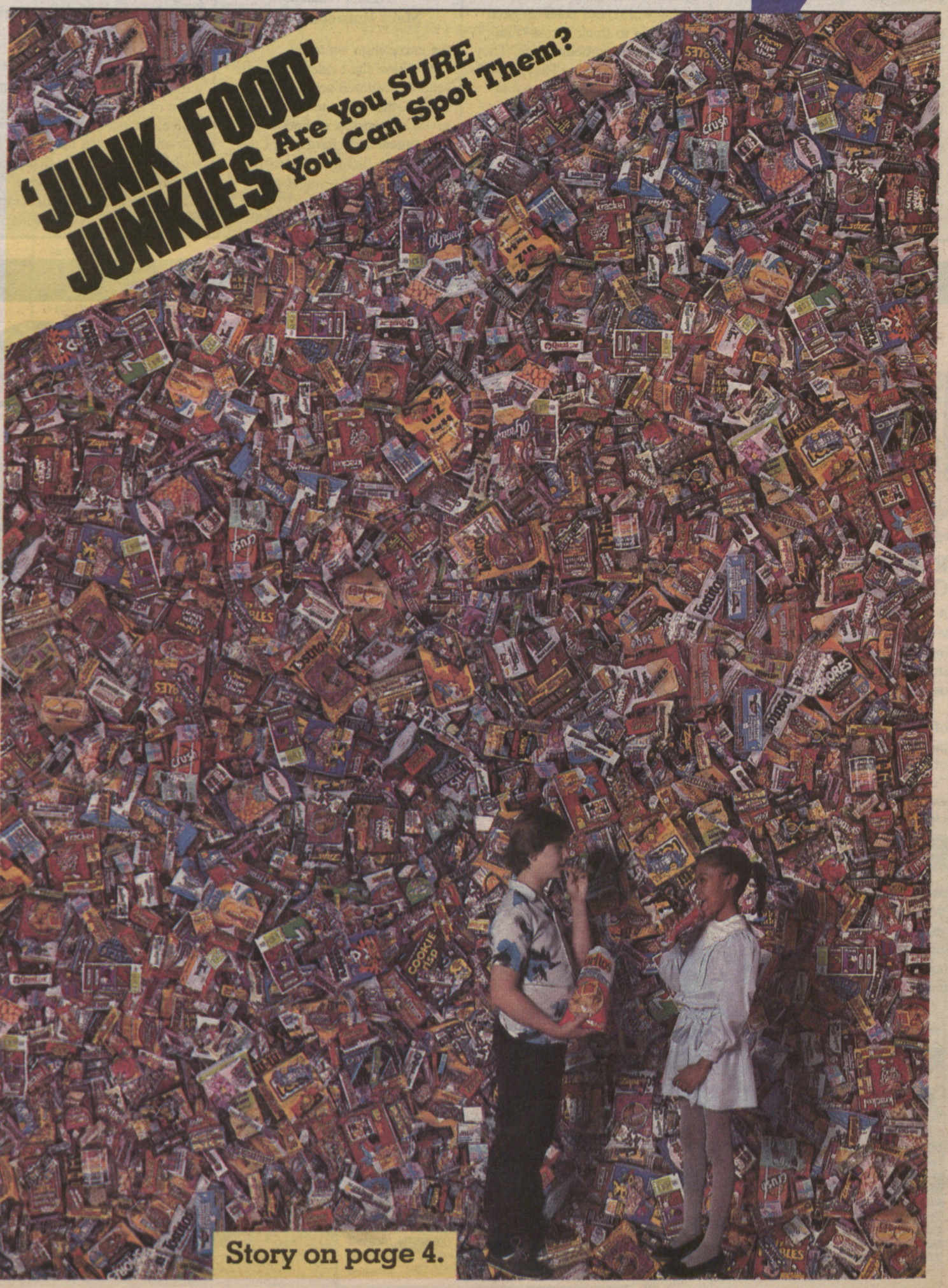


'JUNK FOOD' JUNKIES Are You SURE You Can Spot Them?

Story on page 4.

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Breaking the Mold

Most of us who work in public education find ourselves strapped in a structural straitjacket. Those straps are getting uncomfortable. And I'm convinced they're unnecessary.

The typical secondary school day, for instance, is packed with separate and unrelated classes—each one 50 minutes long, separated from the next one by a clanging bell. Learning comes in boxes marked *geometry* or *English* or *social studies* or *general business*.

These boxes, we are told, can be arranged in any sequence. The order doesn't matter, since the content of any one learning box bears no relation to the content of any other. In social studies, you learn some history and economics. In Spanish, you learn verb endings.

"It's all very neat, all very tidy, and all very obsolete." That's the judgment of Association member Jon Harkness, coordinator of the K-12 science curriculum for Wisconsin's Wausau school district. I agree with Harkness, as I think most of you do. We know that the rigidly compartmentalized curriculum does a disservice to our students.

Outside high school, life isn't organized into boxes so discrete and self-contained. Problems surface in undifferentiated clusters, not clearly defined categories. To succeed—to thrive—in this world, our students need to be able to think across traditional academic boundaries. They need holistic vision. They need, very simply, to be able to *integrate* knowledge.

Then why aren't we moving students in this direction? Well, there's that straitjacket. And what keeps so many of us strapped in is our lack of autonomy—our lack of control over the curriculum we teach.

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

We have the evidence—from schools scattered across the nation—that when teachers are given appropriate control over the content and character of the curriculum, boldly imaginative and pedagogically sound programs are the result.

One example: in the Northfield Township High School district in Illinois, teachers are working hard to make high school a place where knowledge knows no boundaries. Northfield teachers stress the need for *synthesized* knowledge. They're fond of telling students the story of the Chevrolet Nova. General Motors officials were perplexed by the car's low sales in Latin America. Eventually, someone told them that in Spanish the phrase "*no va*" means "no go."

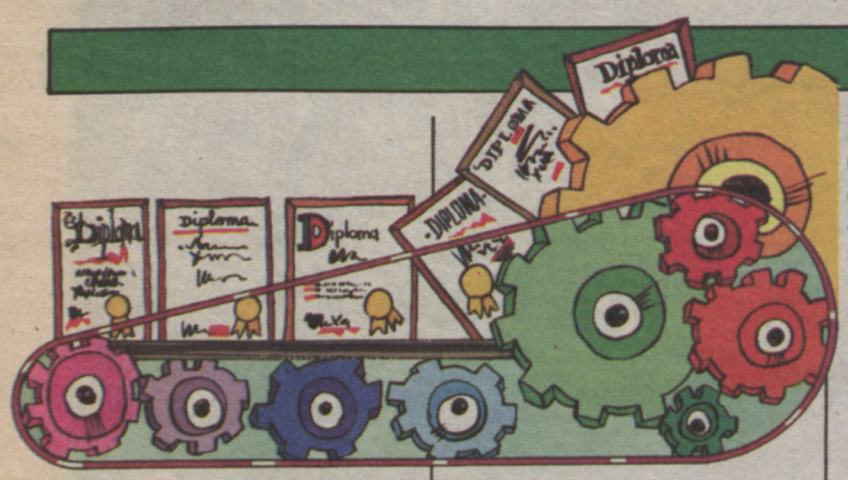
That's a mistake a graduate of Northfield Township's special program would never make. The Northfield teachers are exploring exciting new ways to break down the tired thinking that slices learning into separate, unrelated disciplines. The centerpiece of this effort is an imaginative, interdisciplinary program that unites foreign language, social studies, and English faculty members in a four-year effort to help students develop higher-order analytical skills.

The Northfield program signals the advances that are possible when local school faculties are granted the opportunity—*and the autonomy*—to experiment, to open new paths to understanding, to break through crusty pedagogical molds.

I am not by any means saying that education workers want to control education. But I am saying we want to be equal partners within the education community. I am not saying that teachers want freedom from public accountability. But I am saying that not only do we deserve a voice, but—more important—the nation deserves to hear our voice.

We need more of the kind of imaginative exploration that's going on in Northfield Township. We can overcome the problems inherent in the typical fragmented secondary school curriculum if we are given the voice we deserve in educational policy making.

TRENDS



Run-of-the-Mill Credentials

A new breed of diploma mill—tough and aggressive—is operating full force, according to a study by the American Council on Education.

The Council, after three years of information gathering, reports that at least 145 organizations offer bachelor's degrees that are "clearly fraudulent under state and local laws." Another 114 are classified as being in the twilight zone between nominal legality and outright fraud.

The victims of this con game are not only unsuspecting students, but also the many honest, innovative, nontraditional education programs that at first glance may actually resemble diploma mills.

Both give credit for "life experience," but in legitimate programs the schools require careful documentation and do not allow applicants to grant themselves credits.

A Tens Moment

Will America be ready when metrics measurement replaces our current system?

Probably not, says the U.S. Metrics Association. The day is fast approaching when both private industry and government will use metrics exclusively, and yet metrication has yet to find a secure place in our K-12 curriculum.

The entire U.S. auto industry will convert to metrics by the end of this calendar year, and the U.S. Department of Defense has set 1990 as the date for its conversion.

Return of the One-Room School?

One-room public schools, on the decline in this country for the past 50 years, are beginning to make a comeback, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Education and the Rural Education Center at Brigham Young University.

In Montana, for example, the number of one-room schools has been increasing steadily since 1975. Throughout the west and the Plains States, legislatures are rewriting laws to reverse the trend toward school consolidation.

And the western influence now appears to be heading east: this year West Virginia officials waived existing rules so the state's last one-room school could remain open.

Escargot in the Ivy

The Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER) is currently accepting nominations for its Silver Snail Awards, given annually to organizations that have been spectacularly sluggish in efforts to reduce sex discrimination.

Before submitting nominations, be aware that it will be hard for any new entry to top the 1979 winner: Cornell University. Cornell's affirmative action guidelines would have given women equal representation on the faculty in the year 2395.

Send nominations to PEER, 1413 K St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

32,500 Hours Of Violence . . .

Excess exposure to rock music and TV, the lyrics and plots of which are saturated with violence, is causing a generation of young Americans to have a distorted view of life. So concludes a recent feature in *U.S. News & World Report* headlined "What Entertainers Are Doing to Our Kids."

The facts:

During grades 7-12, teens listen to an average 10,500 hours of rock music, the lyrics of which have never been more sexually explicit and violent.

During grades 9-12, they see 18,000 murders in 22,000 hours of TV viewing—twice the time they spend in class during 12 years of school.

The result, says the article, is that teens perceive life as more dangerous and threatening than it actually is.

. . . And Perhaps One Consequence

High school student leaders have successfully faced the challenges of alcohol, drugs, and sex—but not suicide.

More than one-third know a young person who has committed suicide or attempted it, and 28 percent have considered taking their own lives.

These statistics come from high school leaders themselves—participants in the 16th Annual Survey of High Achievers, conducted last spring by *Who's Who Among American High School Students*.

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Assistant Editor: Bill Fischer
Publisher: Robert E. Harman
Associate Publisher: Sam Pizzigati
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HEALTH AND SAFETY

AIDS IN THE SCHOOLS

New NEA guidelines offer help to local Associations

—*Jane Power*

The beginning of this school year brought mounting alarm across the country over the confirmed or possible presence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Sydrome (AIDS) victims in schools. Turmoil erupted in communities as diverse as Queens, N.Y., and Kokomo, Ind., as districts unprepared to face the AIDS problem also faced public dispute, school boycotts, and unnecessary pain and fear among students, parents, and employees.

In October, NEA's 130-member Board of Directors adopted a set of model guidelines for dealing with victims of AIDS. The guidelines—a direct response to requests from NEA affiliates—are designed as recommendations that school districts and colleges can use to shape an AIDS policy to their own circumstances.

If possible, all school districts and higher education institutions should adopt policies for dealing with AIDS victims *before* any actually appear in their schools or on campus, the NEA Board recommends.

The NEA model guidelines are compatible with recommendations issued in August by the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. But the NEA guidelines are the first to address the specific situation of students *and* school employees.

The NEA recommendations specify that each case of infection with the AIDS virus should be considered individually by a team drawn from the medical profession, the school or college, and representatives of the patient.

The exceptions to this case-by-case approach would be those infected students who have open sores that can't be covered or who can't control their bodily secretions. Under NEA's recommended guidelines, such students would be automatically excluded from school or campus.

Any K-12 students excluded from the school setting should receive "an adequate alternative education," and any excluded employees should be allowed to use available medical leave and receive available disability benefits, the guidelines state.

The Board of Directors emphasized that the NEA guidelines are based on presently available medical information and should be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary to reflect new information.

NEA's suggested policies have already gone to work for local affiliates.

The Montgomery County (Md.) school board was brought face to face with the AIDS issue when two county teachers died from the disease. The board adopted a temporary policy of excluding students or staff members with AIDS from school, pending further examination. The Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) talked with AIDS researchers and sought a more permanent policy that would take case-by-case differences into account. The local found useful guidance in the NEA recommendations.

"NEA had done a good job of looking at the medical evidence and balancing the various interests that are involved," MCEA President Mark Simon says. "The day after the guidelines came out, we took them to the school board meeting to reinforce our position."

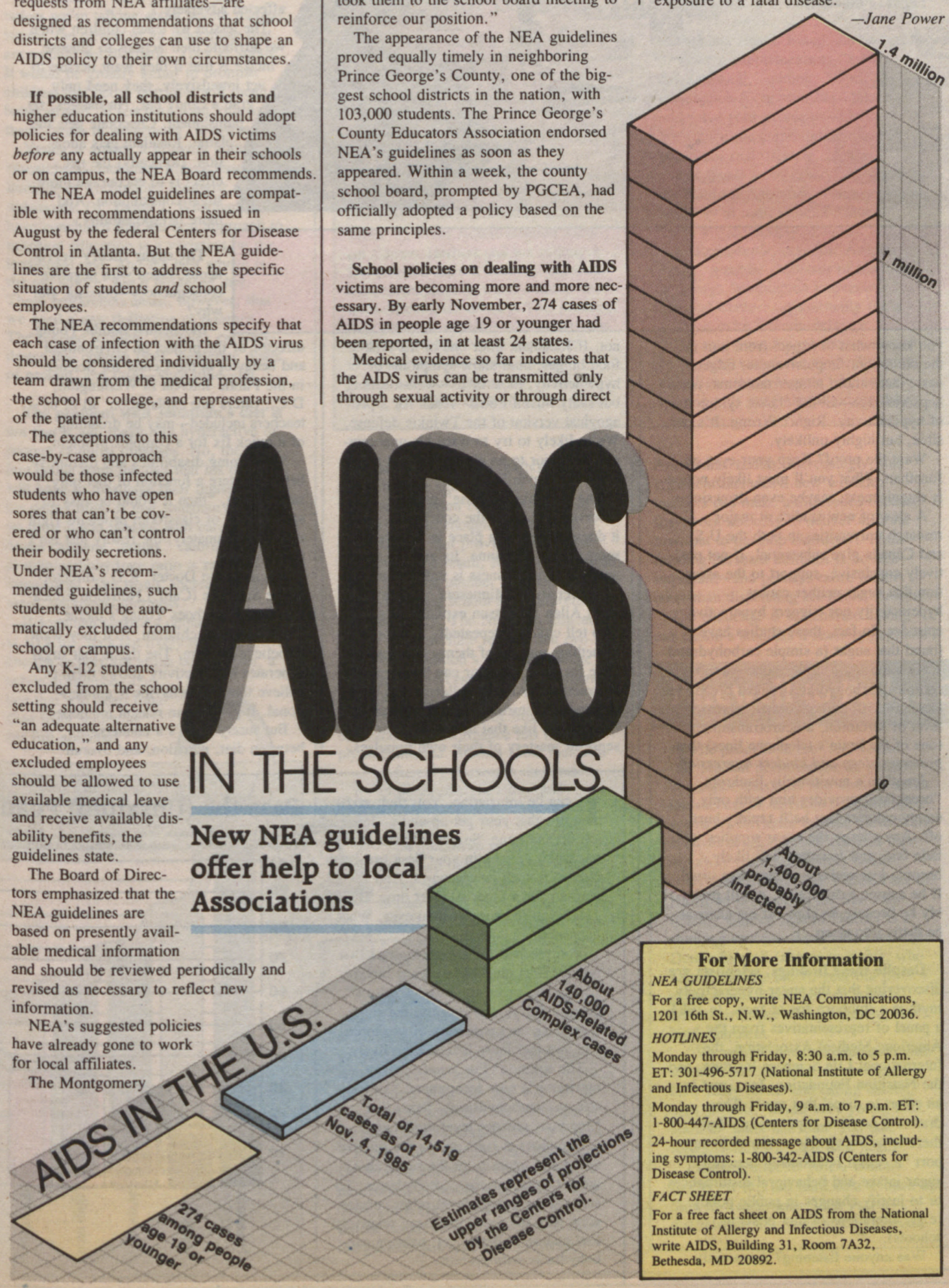
The appearance of the NEA guidelines proved equally timely in neighboring Prince George's County, one of the biggest school districts in the nation, with 103,000 students. The Prince George's County Educators Association endorsed NEA's guidelines as soon as they appeared. Within a week, the county school board, prompted by PGCEA, had officially adopted a policy based on the same principles.

School policies on dealing with AIDS victims are becoming more and more necessary. By early November, 274 cases of AIDS in people age 19 or younger had been reported, in at least 24 states.

Medical evidence so far indicates that the AIDS virus can be transmitted only through sexual activity or through direct contact with contaminated blood cells (e.g., via transfusions or contaminated hypodermic needles). The most common way youngsters contract the disease is through birth to an AIDS-infected mother.

Medical authorities predict it may be years before an AIDS preventive or cure is developed. As a result, the disease—which has an incubation period of several years—will probably remain a problem for some time.

School districts and colleges need to face that fact—now—with carefully developed policies that strike a balance between the rights of AIDS victims to an education or continued employment and the right of other students and school employees to be free from the risk of exposure to a fatal disease.


1.4 million
1 million
0
About 1,400,000 probably infected
About 140,000 AIDS-Related Complex cases
Total of 14,519 cases as of Nov. 4, 1985
274 cases among people age 19 or younger
AIDS IN THE U.S.
Estimates represent the upper ranges of projections by the Centers for Disease Control.

For More Information

NEA GUIDELINES

For a free copy, write NEA Communications, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

HOTLINES

Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET: 301-496-5717 (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases).

Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET: 1-800-447-AIDS (Centers for Disease Control).

24-hour recorded message about AIDS, including symptoms: 1-800-342-AIDS (Centers for Disease Control).

FACT SHEET

For a free fact sheet on AIDS from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, write AIDS, Building 31, Room 7A32, Bethesda, MD 20892.

News Beat

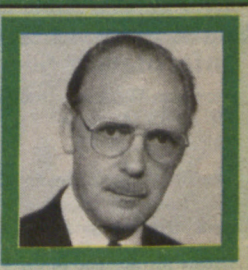
● A new U.S. Census Bureau study has concluded that the American people are "the **most educated** in the world." According to the Census Bureau figures, 32 percent of American adults over age 25 have at least some college education. By comparison, only 14.5 percent of Japanese adults over 25 have attended college.

● The first national report devoted to **middle-level schooling**—grades 5 to 9—has recommended that teacher salaries be raised a minimum of 25 percent. The report, prepared by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, has been mailed directly to 35,000 principals and assistant principals across the nation. Among the new study's other recommendations: teachers should not be assigned noninstructional duties, and students should be given the chance to experiment with many courses. (*See related feature on page 12.*)

● In 1981, Congress adopted a Reagan Administration proposal that consolidated 28 federal education aid programs into a single **block grant** to each state. That consolidation, the National Committee for Citizens in Education has charged, is shortchanging low-income students and proving a windfall for private schools. The committee cites Boston, where private schools now get 27.8 percent of the consolidated aid dollars, as a prime example of how the block grant program has helped subsidize private education.

● The national group that accredits **teacher training** programs is getting tough on colleges of education that don't measure up. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) refused to fully approve nearly a quarter of the colleges that applied for accreditation in 1984-85. In 1983-84, less than half as many colleges were denied accreditation. Helping push NCATE's stronger stance are the eight NEA members who serve on the 25-person council.

WELL PUT!



"Dictators delight in the ignorance of their subjects. Authority blossoms in a bed of stupidity. A democratic people must, by contrast, be well-informed and capable of rational calculation. For the triumph of evil, it is said, all that is necessary is that the good do nothing. For the triumph of despotism, all that is necessary is that people be ignorant."

—Norman Goble, secretary-general, World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, speaking at the NEA National Conference on the Mission of the Public Schools, October 25 in New Orleans, La.

NUTRITION . . .

Mark Peterson

'JUNK Are You

When the subject is nutrition, our "knowledge" may be more flabby folklore than solid fact.

In 1978, Dan White, a disgruntled San Francisco politician, admitted murdering the mayor and a city supervisor. The jury reduced the charges against White from murder to involuntary manslaughter after his lawyer invoked the "Twinkie defense"—the argument that White's violence was a product of his excessive consumption of sweets and junk food. White was released from prison in 1984. (He died this October, an apparent suicide.)

* * *

Twelve-year-old Jonathan gulps down his typical breakfast: two Twinkies, a pitcher of strawberry Kool-Aid, the gooey remains of the melted Mars bar he forgot to finish off the night before. He rushes toward school, anxious to arrive for his pre-classroom raid on the school's sugar dispenser—the vending machine. Today he chooses chocolate cupcakes and grape taffy.

If you know Jonathan's dietary habits, you know what to expect from him in the classroom: impulsiveness, fidgetiness, inattention, temper tantrums, perhaps violence—all the classic symptoms of hyperactivity. Right? Wrong. It's possible, but highly unlikely.

Want the proof? Keep your eyes on Jonathan. What you'll most likely notice is sluggishness, maybe even drowsiness.

A slew of new studies at major research universities in both the U.S. and Canada give substantial, if not positively conclusive, support to the assertion that sugar neither causes hyperactivity nor triggers hyperactive episodes. In fact, these studies have found that sugar (a simple carbohydrate) acts on the brain in the same way as complex carbohydrates (wheat bread, for example). *All* carbohydrates increase the level of serotonin, a neurotransmitter (one of the brain's telephone lines) that *promotes sleep and hinders aggression.*

Jonathan's nutritionally bankrupt "breakfast" provides him with only empty calories that he'll rapidly burn off. Any energy the sugar supplies will fade fast, and Jonathan will likely become *hypo*active—calmer than usual. If he causes a disruption, it will probably be because he slips off his chair as he drifts into sleep.

Despite these findings, scientists are discovering that the sugar-hyperactivity myth is a stubborn foe of facts. In 1983, a panel of representatives from the American Medical Association, the International Life Sciences Institute, and the Nutrition Foundation, Inc., met in an effort to dispel that myth. They drafted a position paper stating that there is no acceptable evidence to support "a causal relationship between sugar intake and behavioral disturbances or to justify changes in public policy (e.g., alterations of diet plans in schools)...."

Was anyone listening? Apparently not. If Jonathan, after one of his junk food binges, *does* show symptoms of hyperactivity, most of us—well-meaning but sadly misinformed—reach for a pedagogical version of the Twinkie defense. We're likely to try to trace his unacceptable behavior to an elevated blood-sugar level. The myth lives on.

The "Twinkie defense" never deserved a place in the courtroom. And it doesn't deserve a place in the classroom. Or in the home. Its grip on our national consciousness is unfortunate.

University of Minnesota child psychiatrist Allen Josephson explains why: "To tell children repeatedly that there's something outside of themselves responsible for their behavior can be extremely destructive." Among children who have behavioral disturbances, adds Josephson, "a message like that decreases their sense of mastery of their own impulses, and personality development is affected adversely."

The lesson we teach children when we attribute their actions to glucose intake is that if they want license to act impulsively, they need only grab a candy bar. No hassles, no punishment. Chocolate gets the blame. Jonathan gets attention. Ironically, the net effect is to encourage more sugar consumption. And more irresponsibility.

The sugar theory—erroneous, laden with negative consequences—persists. But why?

Biochemist Bambi Young, director of the project on environment and behavior at the Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington, D.C., offers one explanation: all of us—teachers included—may be dreaming of a quick fix for a complex problem.

"If learning disabilities and disruptive behavior were a function of diet only," says Young, "then it would be easy to solve a host of classroom problems right now. Unfortunately, the reality just isn't that simple."

Alicia Dixon Docter, R.D., director of the San Jose (Calif.) Nutrition Education Project, echoes Young's theme: "Teachers love children. And they want to believe in them. The thesis that sugar generates hyperactivity allows them to believe that bad behavior is unintentional. It gives them reason for hope."

But surely there's a connection between diet, nutrition, and overall

Information Sources

American Dietetic Association
430 North Michigan
Chicago, IL 60611

American School Health Association
P.O. Box 708
Kent, OH 44240

Center for Science in the Public Interest
1501 16th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Food Research Action Center
1319 F St., N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

National Council Against Health Fraud, Inc.
P.O. Box 1276
Loma Linda, CA 95354

Nutrition Education for the Public, a dietetic practice group of the American Dietetic Association, urges you to consult a registered *dietitian (R.D.)* or, *in some states, a* licensed *dietitian (L.D.) for professional nutrition/diet guidance.*

Pass the (Unsalted) Peanuts

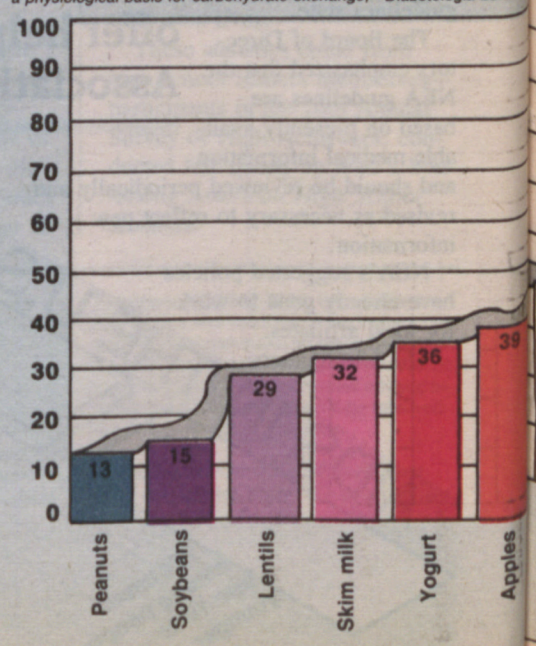
It can be infuriating. You find, at 10 a.m., that your get-up-and-go has got up and gone. So you pop the candy bar that you keep in your desk precisely for such emergencies. And it works...for a time. A *short* time. By 11:15 you're groggier than ever. What happened?

You reached for a carbohydrate that rapidly fires glucose into your bloodstream and gives you a quick jolt of energy. But *just as quickly*, the sugar stimulates the production of serotonin, and you feel more listless than lively.

The solution? For *steady* energy, nutritionists now recommend "slow-release" carbohydrates—foods that keep your glucose level moderate.

The chart at right shows the relative speed and intensity of the sugar shot we get from various carbohydrates. To stay off the energy-level roller coaster, stick with the foods that have relatively low numbers. Better yet, balance carbohydrates with protein.

Adapted from David Jenkins, et al., "Glycemic index of foods: a physiological basis for carbohydrate exchange," Diabetologia 23: 4[illegible]



. . . AND COGNITION

FOOD' JUNKIES

SURE You Can Spot Them?

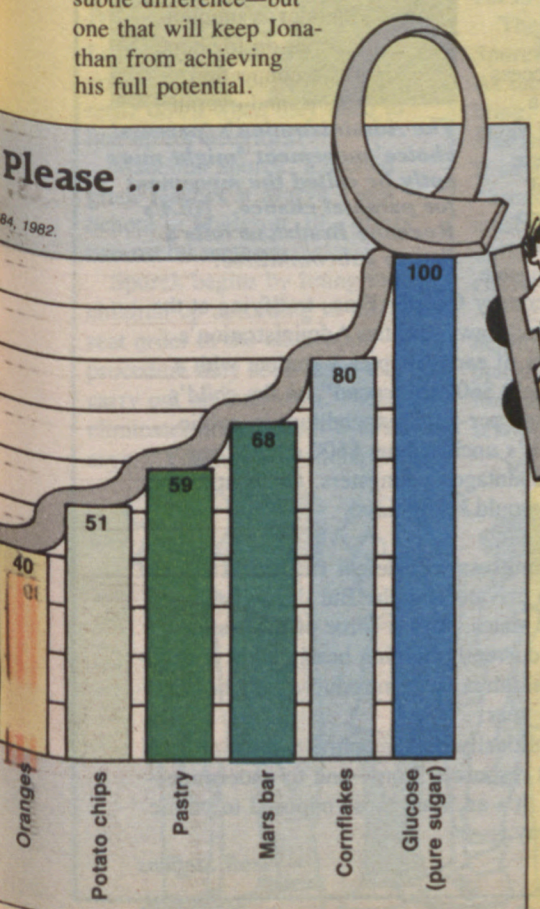
classroom performance?

"Of course," says Young. "But unless we're talking about severe malnutrition, the effects of an inadequate diet are usually not dramatic. They're subtle. It would be grossly unfair to promise children that better nutrition will mean better grades. If teachers want kids to trust them, 'truth in advertising' is essential."

Young is among a growing number of researchers—including Massachusettts Institute of Technology biologist and nutritionist Dr. Judith J. Wurtman—who have concluded that the best approach to nutrition education is a variation on the traditional one. And the best advice is the old advice: *Eat a balanced diet.* These researchers insist, however, that we need a new definition of *balance.* The revised formula: complex carbohydrates that contain fiber, moderate doses of protein, and little—very little—fat.

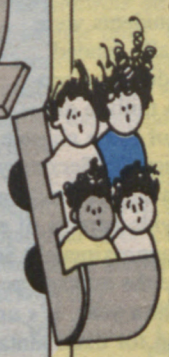
The problem with Jonathan's diet is not that it will make him hyperactive or prompt criminal impulses. No, the problem (aside from the fact that his parents will have to mortgage their house to pay his dental bills) is that Jonathan is short on protein and bloated with carbohydrates carrying "empty" calories. His protein/carbohydrate ratio is radically imbalanced. The result: increased serotonin, decreased alertness.

If Jonathan tackles a demanding task at 10 a.m., he's not likely to be attentive enough to perform at his best. Again, a subtle difference—but one that will keep Jonathan from achieving his full potential.



Jonathan—like all "sugarholics"—is also a leading candidate for "overconsumption malnutrition." He gets more than enough calories, but from sources that provide far too few nutrients. As a result, Jonathan may well suffer from the number one nutritional problem among school-age children: iron deficiency. The Nutrition Education Center at Penn State reports that *two-thirds* of the nation's students receive *less than 50 percent* of the recommended daily intake of iron.

The adverse impact of iron deficiency on academic performance has been amply documented. Studies show that iron deficiency decreases motivation, impedes concentration, and impairs judgment.



So Jonathan is not hyperactive. And depriving him of sugar is not likely to have any profound impact on his behavior. But nutritionally, Jonathan is at risk. Can we rescue him? The consensus is a solid *yes.*

For starters, we need to dislodge fashionable myths—clear away the theoretical debris that obscures scientifically valid findings. When that garbage removal project is complete, it will be easier to spread reliable nutrition information. And this task will fall in large part to schools. The challenge is perhaps more formidable than we think.

More than a few analysts—including Dr. Marian Hamburg, chair of the department of health education at New York University—have argued that school health education programs offer the greatest potential for improving Americans' health. Increasingly, this argument includes a new wrinkle: teachers can make a difference because they work not only to deliver *information,* but to develop *character.* Transforming personal attitudes is no less important—and perhaps more important—than dispensing academic content.

The challenge is to generate among our nation's students a *sense of personal responsibility* for their own health care. And *that* is what Jonathan needs. Let's not take away his junk food. Let's not take away his sugar. Let's instead *give* Jonathan the sense of dignity and pride that will prompt him to take those actions on his own, to assume responsibility for his own well-being.

—Carl Luty

Vitamins: Nutritional Hope . . . or Hoax?

Americans spend $3 billion dollars annually on vitamin and mineral supplements that promise everything from greater sexual potency to a better backhand in tennis.

What do medical professionals think of this investment?

► *99 percent waste,* says Dr. Victor Herbert, chief of the hematology and nutrition research laboratory at the Bronx Veterans Administration Medical Center. Herbert and his colleague Dr. Stephen Barrett decry in particular the consumption of water-soluble vitamins (B complex and C). This practice, they contend, explains why Americans have the world's "most expensive urine and best-nourished toilets."

► *Irrational,* asserts Dr. William Jarvis, president of the National Council Against Health Fraud. Jarvis refers to vitamin supplements as "modern-day snake oil," adding, "Some of these quick-fix approaches—take a pill and solve your problems—tend to undermine the commitment that's necessary for real lifestyle changes."

► *Largely unnecessary,* maintains the National Academy of Sciences: the best way to meet vitamin needs is "with a wide variety of foods."

► *Regrettable,* says Dr. Arthur Frank, assistant professor of medicine at George Washington University Medical Center: "It's actually fairly difficult to be vitamin-deficient."

An anti-vitamin consensus seems to be forming within the medical community. Even those experts who endorse vitamin pills generally avoid anything resembling the extravagant claims made by vitamin manufacturers.

Dr. Michael Jacobson, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, agrees that the best guard against vitamin deficiency is a varied diet, including more vegetables, whole grain, and low-fat dairy products. But, he notes, Americans are not heeding this advice. As a result, it "wouldn't hurt" to take vitamin supplements. But, he adds, this practice is very often "a total waste of money."

In brief, the message from leading nutritionists is simple: Eat right—and skip the pills.

A closing caveat: virtually all nutrition experts agree that vitamin supplements are appropriate for pregnant women, nursing mothers, people on restricted diets, and persons consuming under 1,500 calories a day.

Farewell to Fudge Cake

The proof is in the...er, yogurt. Student performance on pencil-and-paper tests tells you nothing about the success of nutrition education programs. A far more reliable yardstick is *behavioral change:* are students turning away from debilitating habits?

By these criteria, the Please Pass the Nutrition program in the San Jose (Calif.) Unified School District is a stunning success. Association member Donna Stowell (*shown at right*), who helped pioneer the 10-year-old program at San Jose's Hester School, notices dramatic changes among her kindergartners.

"We merge nutrition education with science, and students improve both their study habits and eating habits," says Stowell. "Even very young kids learn to 'think nutrition' and take responsibility for their own health."

Program director Alicia Dixon Docter, R.D., has hard data to back up Stowell's assertions. Last year's districtwide follow-up study showed that the lunchtime protein intake among K-4 students was up by 18 percent; vegetables, up 69 percent; fruit, up 38 percent; bread, up 16 percent; salad, up 93 percent; milk, up 20 percent.

Pete Wooley

A straight-A performance—by any standards.

For information on this program, write to The San Jose Nutrition Education Project, 250 Stockston Ave., San Jose, CA 95126.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Celebrate America's Newest Holiday

It was over 20 years ago that Martin Luther King, Jr., revealed his "dream" of conquering poverty, racism, and injustice. His nonviolent campaigns made it possible for minorities to enter the American mainstream—and for oppressed, colonized people around the world to aspire to independence and economic betterment.

Many Association members have long observed Dr. King's birthday, January 15, in their classrooms. An NEA-backed law passed by Congress in 1984 makes that birthday a federal holiday—the nation's 10th—beginning in 1986. The holiday will be observed on the third Monday in January; the first holiday will fall on January 20.

Congress has established the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission to help plan and coordinate national ceremonies and activities in honor of Dr. King and his dream. Coretta Scott King chairs the Commission. NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell serves as cochair of its education committee.

Among the activities planned:

► A nationally broadcast TV special in honor of Dr. King, on the evening of January 20.

► Weeklong festivities in Atlanta, Ga., sponsored by the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change.

► Special ceremonies in the U.S. Capitol rotunda.

► Regional college and university institutes and seminars about the principles of nonviolence.

The Commission recommends that schools throughout the nation participate in a "learn-a-bration" as the holiday approaches—a celebration of Dr. King's life and work through educational activities such as—

► Oratorical and essay presentations.

► Singing of songs from the civil rights movement.

► Student assemblies and PTA programs.

► Birthday parties.

► Dedication of an appropriate facility in honor of Dr. King.

► Circulation of the "Living the Dream" pledge, shown above, among students, teachers, support staff, administrators, and parents.

—Mary Faber

Living The Dream Pledge

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and work, I pledge to do everything that I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom and peace will grow and flourish.

On January 20, 1986, I,_____ (Name)
commit myself to living the dream by:

Loving, not hating,
Showing understanding, not anger,
Making peace, not war.

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Be a part of history, sign and mail the pledge

Copies of this pledge card are available from the King Federal Holiday Commission, 451 7th St., S.W., Washington, DC 20410.

A Wealth of Classroom Resources

Available free from NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036:

Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Guide for Helping NEA Affiliates Observe the Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. This brand-new, 20-page guide includes King holiday information, suggested Association activities, a biographical sketch, information about the King Center, the text of the "I Have A Dream" speech, and film and book lists.

King: The Making of a Legend. Commemorative issue of *American Visions*—the magazine about Black culture published by the Smithsonian Institution. Includes articles on the holiday and the civil rights tradition, an account of what states and cities are planning for the holiday, a chronology of Dr. King's life, the text of the "Letter from Birmingham Jail," information about the King Center in Atlanta, a calendar of events, and book reviews.

Free from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday Commission, 451 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20410:

Living the Dream: Our National Holiday, January 20, 1985. Booklet includes pledge and fund cards and suggested approaches for family, community, national, and international celebrations.

Learn-a-bration. Other pamphlets and brochures containing teaching suggestions are being prepared by the Commission as we go to press. Write for details.

Available from Ginn and Co., 4343 Equity Drive, P.O. Box 2649, Columbus, OH 43216 (800/848-9500):

Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Life and Dream, by Christine King Farris. A 56-page "worktext" prepared by Dr. King's sister (an educator) offers 10 lesson plans, each including questions, vocabulary lists, and a variety of suggested activities. Separate editions available for elementary (grades 3-5) and intermediate (grades 6-8) students. $1.95 per copy, or $37.50 for 30 student worktexts and an annotated teacher's edition. Add 7 percent for shipping and handling.

MISSING CHILDREN

The kids pictured here have disappeared from their homes. They've been reported to NEA by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a nonprofit organization funded through the U.S. Department of Justice.

If you think you've seen any of these youngsters in your school or elsewhere, please contact the Center immediately at **800/843-5678.**

Christina Marie Parrish
Born: 12-25-67.
Last seen: 9-6-84 in Akron, Ohio, on a city bus going home from school.
5'1", 140 lbs., brown eyes, black hair.

Richard ("Ricky") Barnett
Born: 11-26-79.
Last seen: 8-31-82 at Hillcrest Farms in Grangeville, Idaho.
3', 32 lbs., brown eyes, brown hair, scar just below left eye.

Maurice Laron Jefferson
Born: 8-8-67.
Last seen: 11-28-83 in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., when he left home for basketball practice.
5'11", 158 lbs., brown eyes, black hair (blond around edges). Bow-legged, mole on right ear, two warts on right wrist.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Vouchers: Chance, Not Choice

Why undermine a successful program? That question is repeatedly asked in Washington these days as the Reagan Administration prepares to unveil its latest plan for the nation's schools—a bill that would convert Chapter 1 of the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act to a voucher program.

At press time, the Department of Education was seeking congressional sponsors for the bill—the specifics of which were among Washington's most closely held secrets.

Chapter 1 provides federal funds for compensatory programs to meet the special educational needs of poor children. The Administration's voucher plan would take the money that now goes to local school districts for this program and give it directly to parents in the form of vouchers they could "spend" at the school of their choice.

Chapter 1—like its predecessor, the landmark Title I—is one of education's success stories. The U.S. Department of Education has repeatedly cited Chapter 1 programs as exemplary—and studies have shown that Chapter 1/Title I students gain significant, and lasting, educational benefits.

Why then is the Administration intent on totally restructuring this program—and using it to introduce vouchers?

Education Secretary William Bennett, the Administration's leading voucher proponent, set forth the rationale in a speech before the National Catholic Educational Association last spring. "The reason we have been urging that our Chapter 1 program be administered through vouchers," he said, "is to give students from less fortunate environments the chance to choose private schools too."

The key phrase here, of course, is "*choose private schools.*" The Administration's concern, suggests National PTA director of government relations Arnold Fege, "is not improvement of our nation's public schools—nor is it providing educational excellence and equity for disadvantaged children. Rather, it's furthering the effort to divert public funds to private schools."

That effort—in the form of tuition tax credits as well as vouchers—has been overwhelmingly rejected by Congress in the past. To make the idea more palatable to the American public, voucher proponents now speak of "parental choice."

"Vouchers offer the illusion of choice with the reality of high-stakes risks for the disadvantaged," NEA Secretary-Treasurer Roxanne Bradshaw testified at an October Senate hearing. "Under the mantle of 'parental choice' lies the frightening specter of the return to segregated schools, the undermining of the Constitution's separation of church and state—and the eventual demise of our system of universal publicly funded education."

The Administration's 'parental choice' movement "might more aptly be called the movement for parental chance," NEA's Roxanne Bradshaw tells a Senate subcommittee.

America's public schools are in the midst of a financial crisis. The current lack of funding undermines the access of millions of children to a quality education. Twenty years ago, 8 million students were served by federally funded compensatory education programs. Today 5 million are—just 45 percent of those eligible.

Assistant Education Secretary Chester Finn, testifying at the same Senate hearing as Bradshaw, said the Administration's plan would provide parents of each Chapter 1 student with a voucher worth approximately $600 to "spend" on the child's education. Since the average per-pupil expenditure in public schools is $3,429 a year, it's unclear how $600 could "buy" quality education for disadvantaged youngsters. Or what kind of "choice" poor parents would really have.

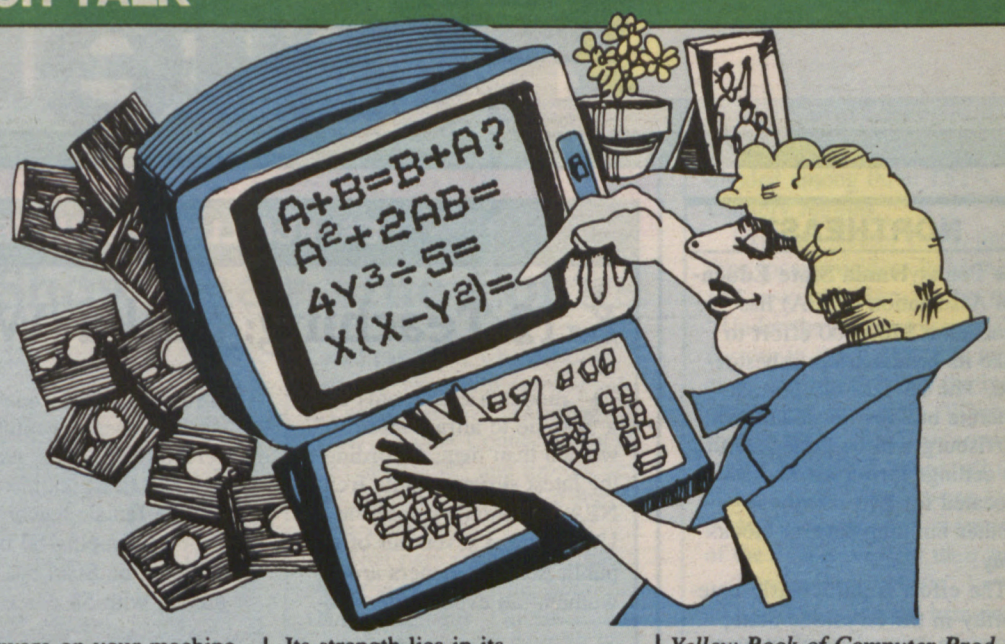
Indications are that Congress will defeat this latest effort to transfer public funds to private schools. But the debate over "choice" is moving to the states. A task force of the National Governors Association is currently holding hearings on the subject. At least 15 state legislatures have introduced voucher or tuition tax credit bills this year.

"Parental choice," a politically popular phrase, is being used to mask attempts to divert resources from—and to undermine—America's public schools. It's an issue those opposed to public education won't let go away.

—Heidi Steffens

TECH TALK

Classroom Computers: What's New, What's Hot



What kind of software do classroom teachers really want? *Classroom Computer Learning* magazine recently surveyed its readers to find out. Here are some of the results:

► Word processing programs and drills/tutorials tied for most frequently used software, selected by a total of 75 percent.

► An overwhelming 92 percent felt that software instructions should be *both* on the screen *and* in the manuals.

► The ability to modify software, e.g., change a spelling list, was important to 83 percent.

► Almost 50 percent were interested in classroom management programs to keep track of grades; another 43 percent were interested if such programs were part of a complete curriculum package.

► Almost 50 percent were interested in using authoring systems to create lessons as well as tests.

Meanwhile, a survey of the states by *Electronic Learning* magazine found strong support for classroom computers.

► 26 states require K-12 students to take some kind of computer literacy instruction.

► 36 states have a designated coordinator to promote computer education.

► 41 states have some type of software evaluation materials available to schools and districts.

► 13 states use state-approved or state-adopted computer materials.

On the commercial front, folks are wondering if Apple is still golden—or slightly tarnished. The Apple Corporation is worth $2 billion, primarily because its Apple II line was a moneymaker, but the Macintosh could spoil the whole barrel. Lacking a complete line of software, it hasn't sold as well as expected. That's probably one reason Apple stock has dropped from $63 to $14 a share in the past two years.

Reorganization was the firm's answer to its first loss as a public corporation. The Apple II and Macintosh divisions have been consolidated, three factories have closed, and 1,200 workers have been laid off. Steve Jobs, the firm's remaining co-founder, has resigned as chairman to launch a computer venture aimed at the rapidly growing higher education market.

The good news? Apple will now contract with outside organizations to develop and supply software products, so more variety will be available. What's more, if last summer's rebates, grants, and expansive credits are any indication, the buyer can expect more advantageous promotions.

And if you own an IBM PC or a compatible, you can now run Apple DOS and Apple CP/M software on your machine by using the *Trackstar* coprocessor board (list price, $499). Available from Diamond Computer Systems, 3380 Montgomery Dr., Santa Clara, CA 95054 (408/986-0100).

Moving in to challenge the "big boys" of the personal computer business are Atari and Commodore. Atari has introduced the 520ST computer with 512K RAM and 3.5 disk drive for a list price of $799. The color monitor and hard disk drive are additional.

Atari's 260SD is a smaller, nonexpandable version with 256K and disk drive for $499. Digital Research developed the software operating system (TOS) and graphics (GEM). Available from Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086 (408/745-2000).

The Commodore Amiga with 256K and 3.5 floppy disk drive sells for a list price of $1,295. Its strength lies in its expandability—another $1,000 buys an advanced sound and graphics package, an RGB color monitor, expansion to 512K of RAM, and hard disk drive. Software that provides IBM compatibility is available, too. The new Commodore 128 model runs all the 64 software and sells for $349. It's expandable to 512K. Available from Commodore Business Machines, Inc., 300 Valley Forge Square, King of Prussia, PA 19405 (215/431-9100).

Some analysts feel these lower-priced machines are destined for mass merchandisers like K-Mart, because specialized stores like Computerland or Entre can't find enough profit in them to support their service and overhead.

Finally, if you're in the market for quality software, consulting the NEA Educational Computer Service's 175-page *Yellow Book of Computer Products for Education* should be your first step. The *Yellow Book* describes the programs that have won NEA Teacher Certification—that is, they've met ECS's stringent criteria and stood up to classroom testing by a panel of 80 specially trained NEA members.

Order the 1986 edition of the *Yellow Book* by December 31, 1985, and you'll receive free ECS's 36-page *Guide to the Software Assessment Procedure*, a $5 value. The *Guide* describes the assessment checklist the ECS panel members use to test software products with their students.

For your copy of the *Yellow Book* and free guide, send $15 or your VISA or MasterCard number and expiration date to NEA Educational Computer Service, P.O. Box 70267, Washington, DC 20088-0267. (Ask for #NS004TG).

—NEA Educational Computer Service

IDEA EXCHANGE

Make Lining Up More Orderly

Looking for new ways to get your rambunctious students to settle down when they need to line up for activities?

Madeline Spurck, a second grade teacher at Marya Yates School in Matteson, Ill., offers two useful methods.

Spurck begins by lining the children up according to their seat order in the classroom—a procedure they soon learn to carry out on their own. "This eliminates arguments," Spurck says. "You never again have to hear the complaint: 'Teacher, he cut in front of me.'"

Then, to cut down on noise, Spurck uses a "circle of quiet." As the students begin assembling, she asks one child to draw a large circle on the blackboard. If anyone talks, he or she "breaks" the circle of quiet and must sit down, while Spurck writes the offender's name in the circle.

The techniques are especially helpful, Spurck says, at times that tend to be chaotic—like lunchtime and the end of the school day.

Writing Cracks Wall of Silence

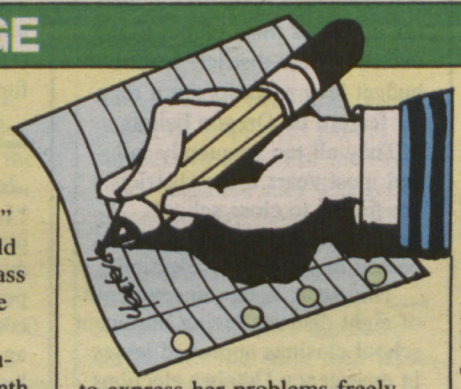
Have you ever encountered a student who simply "clams up" when upset? Caroline Trumpold did in her special education class at the Amana School in Middle Amana, Iowa.

Several times a week the student—a learning-disabled seventh grader—would fall into a stubborn silence. Asking her questions didn't help.

One day Trumpold hit upon the idea of passing the child a note during a break: "You seem unhappy about something. Can you tell me about it?"

"She read it without moving a muscle," Trumpold reports. "She then contemplated her next move for what seemed like an eternity before grasping a pencil and slowly writing: 'Yesterday something oful happind mom got laid off of her job and now she has no other pase to work."'

Teacher and student kept up the written "conversation" for a few minutes, and the child began to relax. Eventually she was able to express her problems freely through ordinary conversation.



"Students we label inattentive," Trumpold says, "may actually be preoccupied with personal problems. A written note asking 'What's on your mind?' may allow them to pour out their worries and free their minds for learning."

Real ID Brings Fiction to Life

Students often have trouble developing short-story characters who seem real. As the story unfolds, one small detail will throw the whole narrative into doubt because it just doesn't fit.

To keep characters consistent, English teachers Linda Arnold and Andrea Watson of Littleton, Colo., asks their students to set up an ID folder for their main character and fill it with the kinds of documents real people need.

Students list common forms of ID: birth certificate, driver's license, social security card, credit cards, bank account cards, marriage license, resume, insurance policies, military ID, diplomas and transcripts, membership cards, and certificates of honors.

When they've each decided which types of ID their character might possess, they collect and fill in sample forms.

"In theory," says Arnold, "the students are inventing the information for the forms. But once they get started, the fictional characters almost invent their own identities."

State Side

NORTHEAST

The Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) has launched a $700,000 effort to make its headquarters asbestos-free. The 25-year-old precast concrete building in downtown Harrisburg will be gutted, with the ceilings torn apart and staff relocated for two months to another building several blocks away.

The effort is particularly noteworthy in the Keystone State, where 60 percent of the 3,400 public school buildings are estimated to contain asbestos, and where the total cost for removal is estimated at over $100 million.

By its own asbestos removal effort, PSEA President Nancy Noonan explains, the Association hopes to "make a point we think schools should remember: when human life is at stake, costs are incidental."

MID-ATLANTIC

The Ohio Education Association (OEA) has won a new statewide bargaining unit of some 750 professionals at state libraries and the 50 state schools for the physically and mentally handicapped, incarcerated, and orphaned.

When Ohio's new collective bargaining law took effect in 1984, OEA saw the need to bring bargaining to these previously unrepresented state workers and petitioned the state employment relations board to form a bargaining unit. The board agreed.

OEA gathered the required signatures from 30 percent of the unit members, asking for a representation election. When the balloting took place this fall, OEA beat out "no rep" by a landslide 498-24.

Being a part of the 85,000-member OEA will bring these state employees the clout they need at the bargaining table, predicts Steven Sunker, science teacher at Riverview School for Boys and president of the new State Council of Professional Educators (SCOPE) unit.

"Our major concern is getting a pay raise," says Sunker. "Our present salaries are below the state minimums for public school employees."

PACIFIC

School funding has become an annual crisis in Oregon. This fall 40 districts, enrolling 30 percent of the state's K-12 students, were without sufficient operating funds to last the school year.

Oregon districts fund over 60 percent of their budgets through local property taxes. Since any tax increases must be put to the voters in each district, school budget levy requests are a regular feature on Oregon ballots.

They all too frequently fail—and most years a few districts are forced to close schools before their levies are finally passed in emergency elections.

This year, voters in seven out of eight districts facing imminent school closings approved levies in emergency October elections. In the eighth district, Port Orford-Langlois, the levy failed and schools closed until November 5, when another levy election was scheduled for Port Orford and 29 other districts.

The Oregon Education Association (OEA) has long called for a better source of school revenue as the only way to end this yearly crisis. Last year OEA proposed a 5 percent state sales tax—Oregon now has none—with 80 percent of the revenues earmarked for education.

The OEA plan was put on hold last spring when the state legislature came up with its own sales tax plan. But Oregon voters defeated that plan by a 4-to-1 margin in September. OEA is again working with other organizations to arrive at a tax reform proposal that will provide for stable education funding.

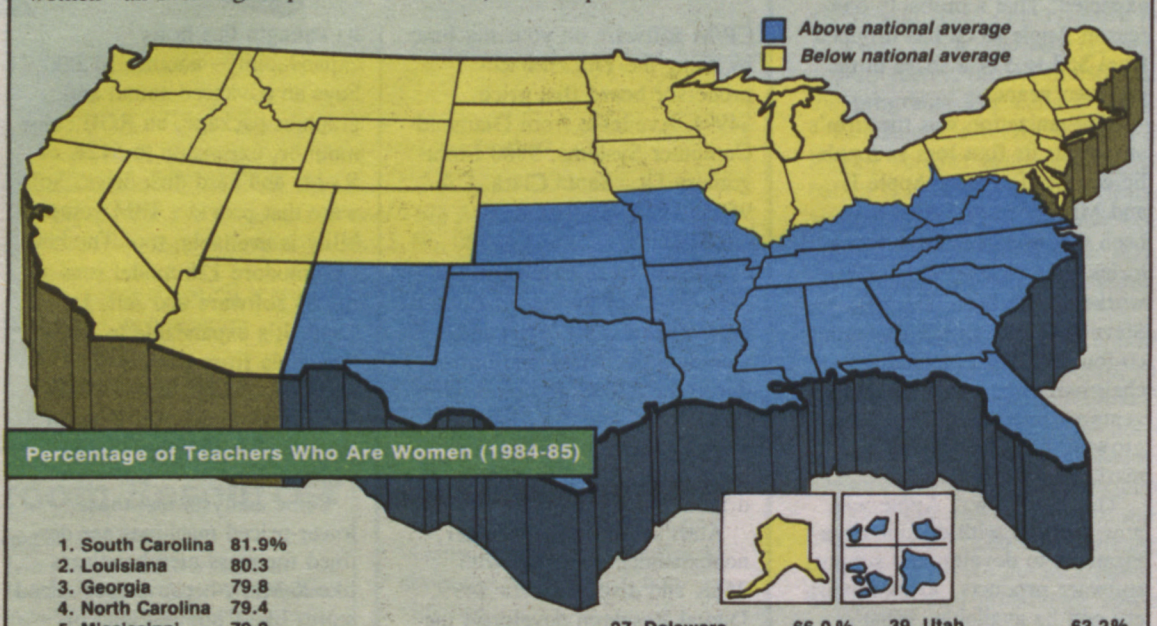
ESPECIALLY IN SOUTHERN STATES...

K-12 Teaching: Still a 'Woman's Profession'

America's classrooms continue to attract more women than men, according to the latest survey results from NEA Research. Across the U.S., almost seven out of ten public school teachers are women—an even higher proportion than a decade ago, when women constituted 67 percent of teachers nationwide.

South Carolina has the most heavily female teaching staff, with a whopping 82 percent; Washington State has the most mixed, with 58 percent female.

The data suggest an interesting pattern: a clear concentration of female teachers in southern states. Contributing to this concentration are historical trends in women's career choices that may be accentuated in the South.



Percentage of Teachers Who Are Women (1984-85)

1. South Carolina	81.9%			27. Delaware	66.0 %	39. Utah	63.2%
2. Louisiana	80.3			28. Arizona	65.9	40. Maine	62.1
3. Georgia	79.8			29. New Jersey	65.7	41. New York	62.1
4. North Carolina	79.4			30. Idaho	65.5	42. Rhode Island	61.1
5. Mississippi	79.2	17. Kansas	69.3%	31. Indiana	65.5	43. Alaska	60.6
6. Virginia	78.6	18. New Mexico	69.1	32. California	65.4	44. Montana	60.2
7. Alabama	78.4	UNITED STATES	68.6	33. Colorado	65.2	45. Wisconsin	59.5
8. Arkansas	78.2	19. Michigan	68.5	34. North Dakota	64.9	46. Oregon	59.2
9. Hawaii	77.3	20. South Dakota	68.4	35. Ohio	64.9	47. Pennsylvania	58.7
10. Texas	76.3	21. Nebraska	68.3	36. Connecticut	64.6	48. Massachusetts	58.1
11. Tennessee	75.9	22. Illinois	68.2	37. Iowa	63.7	49. Minnesota	58.1
12. Florida	74.3	23. Maryland	67.8	38. Wyoming	63.7	50. Washington	57.9
13. Kentucky	73.8	24. Nevada	67.8				
14. Missouri	73.4	25. New Hampshire	67.4				
15. Oklahoma	72.9	26. Vermont	66.2				
16. West Virginia	72.1						

Source: NEA Research

SOUTHEAST

"I don't believe most Mississippians want unions and strikes in our schools," asserts a spokesperson for Save Our Schools, a coalition of Mississippi's largest agricultural, manufacturing, and business associations formed to keep public employees from enjoying union rights.

No matter what powerful interests the coalition represents, the Mississippi Association of Educators believes it's wrong and is out to prove it. The fight will come in the statehouse, where a ban on strikes by public employees was enacted after MAE's three-week walkout last winter. A proposed public sector collective bargaining law now faces stiff opposition.

But MAE is laying the groundwork for the legislative battle throughout the state, among the people the lawmakers represent. MAE members, contacting local branches of SOS member organizations, are finding that they've never heard of the coalition—and don't agree with it. Teachers and labor groups are writing to coalition members, putting the case for collective bargaining.

But bargaining is just one aspect of education reform. Through publications and sympathetic news media, MAE is working to keep the public eye on the state's unfinished reform agenda as a whole.

WEST

Underground rumors that can ruin a teacher's name and career seldom end up in a courtroom where a jury can vote them true or false. But thanks to an unusual Association-funded lawsuit argued this fall, that's exactly where one set of rumors ended up—and were put down for good.

The verbal allegations—traceable to a single source—accused Huntington, Utah, junior high teachers Janis Blake and Deanna Mecham of unprofessional conduct. The most serious charge involved unprofessional conduct with male students.

Arguing that the accusations were "false, malicious, and defamatory," Utah Education Association attorney Mike McCoy told a state trial court that a teacher's standing in the community is a valuable asset which, if attacked without justification, may be compensated by a jury verdict.

Blake and Mecham—both married women with children, who had always received favorable evaluations of their teaching—got their verdict: the jury awarded them each $10,000 in damages from the defendant. Comments Mecham, "We felt alone when we first heard these terrible stories, but much more hopeful when the Association went to bat for us."

MIDWEST

Minnesota's citizens prefer a program of equal educational opportunity for all students over Gov. Rudy Perpich's "Access to Excellence" plan, according to an informal survey the Minnesota Education Association conducted recently at the state fair.

The governor's plan, which went into effect this fall, lets high school juniors and seniors take courses at public or private colleges and earn high school and college credits at the same time. State aid follows the students.

The plan, MEA believes, allows for selective education—taking the best and the brightest out of the public schools. The result, Association leaders predict, will be many public schools' dropping certain quality programs that would benefit all students.

Nearly a thousand persons visited the MEA state fair booth and responded to the poll; by a three-to-one margin they preferred equal access to education. MEA President Marti Zins calls the survey "an affirmation of the positions we've espoused all along—positions that put us in the mainstream of the population's thinking."

In addition, 71 percent of those fairgoers polled gave public schools a grade of A or B. Respondents were also asked how to improve public schools. A few of their comments: "Fewer students in classes, with more individual attention." "Support teachers and understand they need proper wages for the difficult job they do." "Participate! Vote for increased school taxes." "Elect good school board candidates." "Better discipline, more parent participation." "Volunteer."

"Minnesotans have a high regard for public education," Zins concludes. "While there may be some problem areas, people are happy with the system as it is and show no desire to make massive changes."

Local Look

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The 900-member Manchester Education Association reached agreement with its school board this fall on a new three-year contract that will provide an $18,000 starting salary and a $34,000 maximum by 1988.

The favorable settlement didn't come easily. Negotiations began in October 1984. When there was no settlement by last June, teachers staged an "evacuation day," removing reference materials, file folders, and other possessions that subsidize classroom activity.

In July, hundreds of teachers marched outside the negotiations session, then staged a motorcade through downtown Manchester with yellow ribbons declaring "Education Held Hostage."

This fall, as negotiations seemed still on dead center, MEA members began "working to rule"—teaching classes, but not working beyond contracted hours. Finally, in October, community pressure prompted the board to agree on a fair settlement.

"We're very pleased that we'll now have competitive salaries," reports outgoing MEA President Dorothy Jenis, a former English teacher at Central High School who retired following the settlement. "It never would have happened without the active involvement of hundreds of teachers."

IOWA

Two years ago, substitute teachers in Dubuque were fed up with their working conditions. A district policy allowed them to work only 119 days a year; their salaries were frozen; and the number of days they were required to work before being paid the same daily rate as a full-time first-year teacher had jumped from 10 to 20.

Determined to do something, the subs formed the Dubuque Substitute Teachers Association, Iowa's first organized group of substitutes. Working with the Dubuque and the Iowa State Education Associations, DSTA asked the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) to decide the legality of the 119-day policy. PERB ruled it invalid, and the district agreed to change it.

Next, DSTA went to work on the local administration and school board to improve salaries. The district not only increased the pay rate but also reduced the number of days required to earn a full diem back to 10.

DSTA's initial victories prompted further action. At press time, the Association is awaiting a PERB ruling on its petition to join the Dubuque Education Association's bargaining unit. If PERB agrees, the Dubuque subs will become the first in Iowa to gain bargaining rights.

They've already gained a feeling of solidarity, reports DSTA treasurer Jackie Gayman, one of the Association's first members.

"We substitutes were beaten down for so long and were made to feel grateful for any work we were given. Just like other teachers, we want recognition, respect, and a bigger paycheck. We're no longer invisible. We're a part of a growing, thriving professional group."

WASHINGTON

Dignity was the issue, unity the watchword—and victory the result. By the end of their 25-day strike this fall, the 3,700 teachers, paraprofessionals, and secretaries who belong to the Seattle Teachers Association (STA) had earned the respect of the administration, cemented their ties to the community, and won big gains for students as well as themselves.

Twenty-eight percent of the city's 43,000 students are bilingual, special ed, or score in the lowest 20 percent on standardized tests.

"Our regular classes just aren't regular any more," explains STA President Carol Reed. "To meet the needs of all students, we insisted that the school board come up with funds to reduce class size. We also insisted that staffing decisions be shifted from the central administration to the building level."

STA's contract settlement includes a $3 million fund to reduce class size—and agreement that staffing decisions will be made by building committees.

Extra pay for extra duty days was another major strike issue. A 1982 state law mandating the same school employee salary schedules in all districts has made extra duty days the only avenue for wage increases in districts like Seattle, where pay is above average.

The new STA contract includes three-and-a-half extra duty days paid at $225 a day for all members, and two additional days for classified employees paid at $350 for the two days. For the first time, classified subs will get an extra duty day, paid at $130.

"It was the unity among all our members that made this struggle so extraordinary," says Reed. "Our teacher members stayed on strike after their issues were settled—because all the classified employees' issues hadn't been settled yet.

"And just as important," Reed concludes, "the community was solidly behind us, even though their children were kept out of school. They knew we were fighting not only for ourselves, but for the children of Seattle."

TEXAS

Concern over job security has prompted more than 1,500 educational support staff in the Rio Grande Valley to join locals of the Texas State Teachers Association.

The Valley, which stretches from Laredo to the Gulf of Mexico, includes 33 school districts divided among three TSTA UniServ regions.

Explains Hector Loya, one-time local president in McAllen and now a UniServ staffer there: "Under the *patron* system, the custom in the Valley was to fill classified positions on the basis of political patronage. Whenever a different faction won a majority on the school board, all the classified employees were expected to resign, and supporters of the new group got their jobs.

"Beginning in 1980," Loya adds, "TSTA started bringing cases in federal court, charging districts with firing staff members for exercising constitutionally protected rights of speech, political association, and belief. We won every case, including several hundred thousand dollars in back pay and attorneys' fees."

The Association remains on the alert for abuses, Loya stresses. "The politicians don't want to give up control over those jobs."

KENTUCKY

It took some pressure from the local Association, but elementary teachers in northern Kentucky's Kenton County now get a 10-minute break whenever they've worked four hours straight.

For years, the school board had blithely ignored a state law that requires the break for all workers. Last spring, Kenton Education Association members at the county's 13 elementary schools decided to take action. At the suggestion of their UniServ representative, they filed 26 individual complaints with the state department of labor.

State officials investigated and promptly ordered the school board to start complying with the law. This fall the board hired aides to fill in for the teachers during their breaks.

"We've been trying to get a daily one-hour planning period for elementary teachers," explains local president Thomas Chapin. "This break is a step in the right direction."

GEORGIA

The Gwinnett County Association of Educators, working with other community organizations, has fought off the first phase of a censorship effort by a new group called Concerned Citizens of Gwinnett. In October the county school board unanimously reaffirmed its policy of dealing with complaints about books through a specific, orderly procedure.

But this story's not over yet: the group Concerned Citizens have vowed to use that procedure to examine and maybe challenge every book now in use in the schools.

VIRGINIA SINGS THE BLUES

Fairfax Teachers Show Their True Colors

In Virginia's Fairfax County, a wealthy Washington, D.C., suburb, students and teachers are seeing red. And blue.

It's all part of a campaign by the 6,300-member Fairfax Education Association (FEA) to publicize teacher frustrations and concerns during the annual meet-and-confer session with the school board. Virginia outlawed public employee collective bargaining back in 1977, but teachers in Fairfax County and many other districts negotiate informally through these yearly give-and-take sessions.

At Frost Intermediate School in Fairfax City, FEA members wore red one day to show their anger over the declining purchasing power of their salaries. Along with red shirts, skirts, ties, and earrings, they sported red badges that declared, "We're in the red. Minus 28 percent in buying power over the last 10 years."

At South Lakes High School in Reston, teachers wore blue on a recent 'Blue Monday.' At some schools, Association members are expressing their emotions in letters to members of the school board or the county board of supervisors. At others, teachers have put jars on display, dropping in a bean for every dollar they spend out of their own pockets on classroom supplies.

"We're determined to take

Joe Di Dio

Teachers at South Lake High School in Reston, Va., wear blue to demonstrate their feelings about inadequate salaries.

charge, to get out the word that our salaries aren't as high as we deserve," says FEA President Donna Caudill.

The Association is calling for a 20 percent across-the-board pay hike, which would raise the minimum starting salary to at least $22,000. Currently, Fairfax County teachers start at $18,385 and top out at $35,846 after 17 years if they have an M.A.

"That may sound high, but so is the cost of living here," Caudill explains. Fairfax County's average family income is among the nation's highest, at $46,000. Its 124,000-student school system is one of the 10 largest in the country, with a reputation as one of the best.

"As our campaign slogan states, 'We deserve what's right, not what's left,'" Caudill says. Actually, there's plenty left in the county budget. In the past two years the county has built up a surplus of more than $80 million but has spent none of it on teacher salaries and benefits.

Last year, a study commissioned by the state governor showed that 83 percent of northern Virginians considered their schools excellent or good, and 87 percent were willing to support a tax increase if the money went to education.

Association members are frustrated by the gap between the obvious public support and the level of funding approved by the politicians. They're determined to get their message across loud and clear—any way they can.

RESOURCES

TV/Radio Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families:

The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin—*ABC-TV, Saturdays, November 30 and December 7, 11-11:30 a.m. ET.* Two-part special featuring the official spokesbear for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Crucible: Science and Society series, "The Fun Fair"—*Discovery (cable) channel, Tuesday, December 3, 10-11 p.m. ET; repeated on Thursday, December 5, 6-7 p.m. ET.* A look at the role science plays in designing amusement park rides.

Afterschool Specials—*ABC-TV, Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m. ET. December 4:* (working title) "High School Narcotics" (undercover police officer works to find a student drug dealer and his sources). *December 11:* "ABC Notebook: Making the News" (TV newspeople discuss the newsgathering process.) For free study guides, write to your local ABC station or ABC Community Relations, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.

These Lights of Chanukah—*National Public Radio, Thursday, December 5;* check local listings for times. One hour of music and explanations about the customs and traditions of Chanukah.

Alice in Wonderland—*CBS-TV, Monday, December 9 and Tuesday, December 10, 8-10 p.m. ET.* Four-hour musical version of the Lewis Carroll classic. All-star cast includes Ann Jullian, Jayne Meadows, and Karl Malden.

NOVA series, "Nomads of the Rainforest"—*PBS, Tuesday, December 10; check local listings for times.* A visit to a tribe of Indians in Ecuador who still live as their ancestors did in the Stone Age.

Hound of the Baskervilles—*Arts & Entertainment (cable) channel, Wednesday, December 11, and Thursday, December 12, 6-7 p.m. ET.* Two one-hour episodes based on the famous Sherlock Holmes adventure of the same name.

Nature series, "Kalahari: Wild Life Without Water"—*PBS, Sunday, December 15; check local listings for time.* Documentary about how animals in southwestern Africa adapt to a wilderness with no water. For poster/teacher's guide to help integrate this series into the junior high science curriculum, write on school letterhead to NATURE Guide (Catalog #N00200), American Gas Association, Educational Programs, 1515 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209.

Treasure Houses of Britain—*PBS, Monday, December 16, 9-10 p.m. ET; Monday, December 23, 10-11 p.m. ET; and Monday, December 30, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Series of specials featuring England's most magnificent country homes and the treasures they contain.

The Teller and the Tale series, "Christmas Special"—*syndicated the week of Monday, December 16.* The almost-lost art of storytelling gets a new lease on life.

The Story of St. Francis of Assisi—*Discovery (cable) channel, Tuesday, December 24, 1-2 a.m. ET. Repeated Wednesday, December 25, 9-10 p.m. ET, and Saturday, December 28, 5-6 p.m. ET.* Documentary filmed on location in Italy and England.

Heritage: Civilization and the Jews—*PBS, beginning in January; check local listings for dates and times.* Rebroadcast of nine comprehensive hours on the interaction of Jewish history with Eastern and Classical civilization in the biblical period, with Christendom and Islam in the Middle Ages, and with all nations in modern times. An unusually informative and detailed study guide is available for 4.95 ($4.45 each for orders of 10 or more; $3.95 each for 25 or more) from Robert Miller, WNET, 356 W. 58th St., New York, NY 10019.

Check local listings for dates and times:

ABC News Closeup series, (working title) "Growing Old in America"—*ABC-TV.* Three-hour special looks at concerns of the elderly. For free study guides, write your local ABC station or ABC Community Relations, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.

Christmas Gift—*National Public Radio.* From award-winning children's author Tomie Depaola, an hour of folk tales about Christmas celebrations around the world.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe—*HBO.* Animated feature-length film based on the classic story by C.S. Lewis.

Night of the Meek—*CBS-TV.* Remake of a 1960 "Twilight Zone" episode about a department store Santa who finds Christmas magic in an unlikely place.

One People, Many Voices series, "Downtown and Uptown"—*National Public Radio.* The National Foundation for Jewish Culture presents two hours about the coming of age of Jewish music in America. Theodore Bikel is host.

The Prince and the Pauper—*HBO.* New film based on the Mark Twain classic stars Oliver Reed and Raquel Welch.

Shari Lewis Christmas Concert—*Disney (cable) channel.* Musical variety featuring puppeteer Shari Lewis and the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada.

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NE12

People

Donald Cunningham

Lawrence Ballard

Oakland (Calif.) Education Association activist **Tay McArthur's** American government students have assured their school a place in history—while learning firsthand how government works.

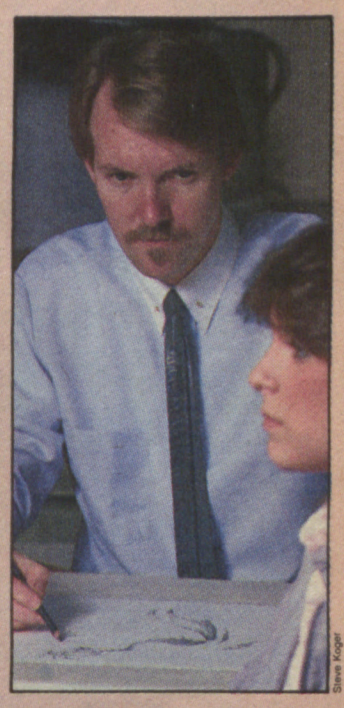
When McArthur told his 1984-85 senior honors class that appearing before at least one governmental body would be a course requirement, the class decided to all work together and testify toward a single goal—having their school, Oakland Technical High, declared a historic landmark.

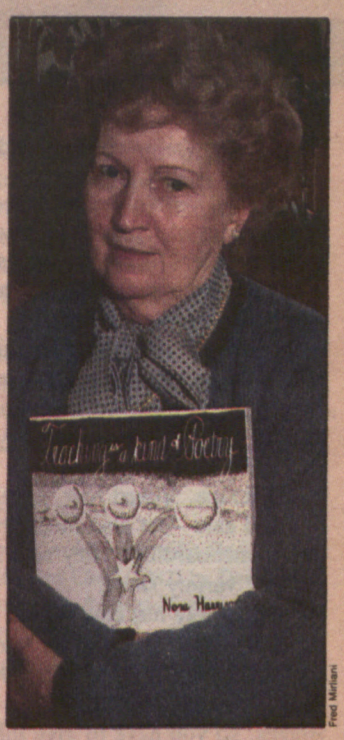
Completed in 1915, Tech High spans three blocks on Oakland's Broadway. It's built in a classical style and features rows of Doric columns, tall bronze doors, and a curved portico. The building was closed in 1976 for extensive renovations designed to make it earthquake-safe; it reopened in 1983.

McArthur's seniors (two of whom appear in the photo along with Oakland Mayor Lionel Wilson, *left*, and McArthur) named themselves "The Landmarkers" and went to work. Historic landmark status could limit the district's ability to close or remodel Tech High.

The students researched the school's history and filled out the multitude of necessary forms. They appeared before the Oakland board of education, planning commission, landmark preservation advisory board, and city council, as well as the Alameda County board of supervisors.

Their efforts paid off last summer when the city council designated Tech High a local landmark. Becoming a national landmark is virtually assured. All that's left now is state landmark status. But when the California State Historical Preservation Commission meets in San Diego, The Landmarkers will be there.


Steve Kagel



Fred Mertani

For Andover, Mass., English teacher **Nora Harrison**, "teaching is a kind of poetry," so that became the title of her self-published collection of poems—each a verse portrait of a student past but not forgotten.

The athlete, the gifted scholar, the comic, the hard worker, and scores of other memorable students are captured in her words—and also illustrated in expressive black-and-white sketches by Harrison's son **Barry**, another Association member who teaches art in Centerville, Ind.

In doing the more than 50 brushed ink illustrations, Barry found his mother's descriptive verses reminded him of his own students. "They seemed universal—at least they sure triggered some memories in me," he reflects.

Copies of *Teaching Is a Kind of Poetry* may be obtained for $12.50 by writing to Aquavia Publishers, Box 37, Ballardvale Station, Andover, MA 01810.

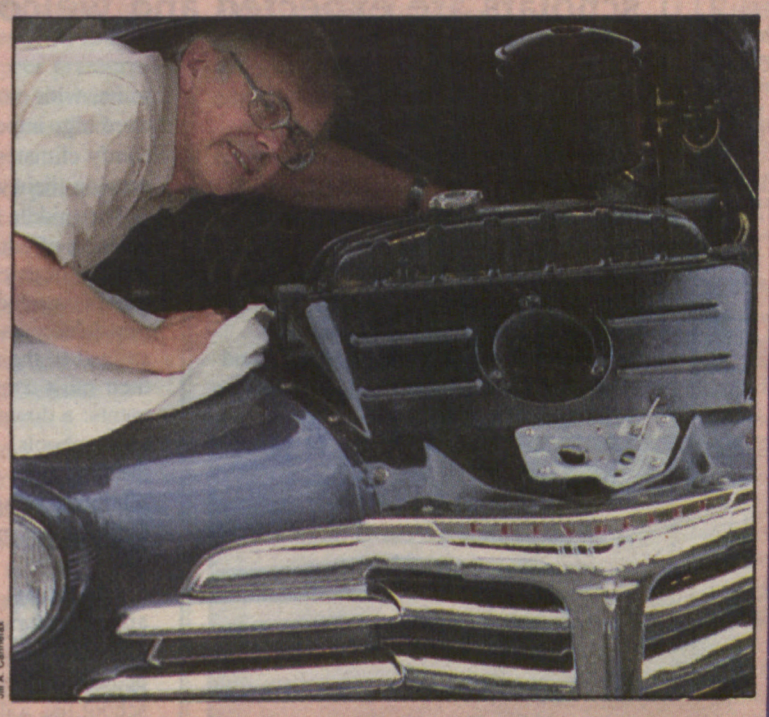
Gary Thompson

Sharon Pearce, sixth grade teacher at Nellingen Elementary School near Stuttgart, West Germany, has walked more than 12,000 kilometers (about 8,000 miles) in the past 12 years.

Her steps have been carefully recorded by *International Volkssport Verband,* an organization that sponsors 10- and 20-kilometer hikes called *volksmarsches* every weekend all over Europe. Pearce has participated in some 850 of these events since 1973. She's taught in Department of Defense Dependents Schools in West Germany since 1967.

"At the end of each hike, everyone celebrates," Pearce explains. "Each participant receives a medal, stamp, or patch, depending on the registration fee paid. Then, in a large tent on the site, the sponsor hosts a festival with food, beer, and live music for dancing."

Pearce, an Overseas Education Association member and Association area director for Germany South-East, combined her avocation and her vocation by sponsoring a 10-kilometer *volksmarsch* at her school recently, which raised $371 for the Statue of Liberty restoration fund. All 450 students participated, and each received a medal bearing a likeness of the statue.


Jill A. Cannefax

Cars, you could safely say, are Joe Kordic's second vocation. But not just any cars. The fourth grade teacher at Alameda Primary School in Portland, Oregon, collects and rebuilds *old* cars—mostly Chevys.

Kordic's cars aren't for show. He drives them—to school, on vacation, everywhere.

"It's the challenge of making an old car as dependable as a new one that I find so appealing," Kordic explains. "It's a labor of love."

Kordic learned everything he knows about cars by trial and error—by hanging around garages and watching, and then making his own mistakes.

Kordic's current crop of cars includes the 1948 Chevy convertible in the photo and two other Chevys—a '52 and a '55. Why Chevys? "I'm not really sure," Kordic says, "maybe it's because my parents had a Chevy when I was a kid."

MIDDLE SCHOOLS. . .

Which of These Kids Is a Seventh Grader?

They *all* are. Good thing they go to a middle school, where punkers, skateboarders, even scholars are expected and welcomed.

"No more cheerleaders?" "No more away games?" "No more dances at night?"

The cries of incredulous seventh and eighth graders pierce the air as they learn that their junior high is about to become a middle school.

More precisely, they learn that their school has adopted a middle-school philosophy: "Let kids be kids, and let their school reflect the fact that they're kids."

This is the age group that's tuned in to Madonna, spiked hair, split-level pierced ears—but also model-building and skateboarding. They're a five-day-a-week variety show.

The variety has educational implications. Larry Dorsey-Spitz, science chair at Pueblo, Colorado's Risley Middle School, explains: "They're at different stages, so you have to give them a lot of variety, believe me."

The middle school movement took off in the late 1960s and early 70s, when two developments occurred almost simultaneously. First, educators began to conclude that junior highs would never achieve their primary aim: easing the transition from childhood to adolescence. Second, K-12 enrollments were dropping, which gave districts a chance to regroup students in new ways.

As to the junior highs, critics said far too many featured departmentalized instruction, interscholastic athletics, and other trappings of senior highs. And some, with more than 1,000 students, were big, impersonal places—hardly comfy climates for timid seventh graders groping their way toward early teendom.

The middle school advocates, a combination of education professors and classroom teachers and school administrators, wanted to take a new look at preadolescents and then design schools attuned to their idiosyncracies. Among their most conspicuous accomplishments: a downshifting of the middle-level schools' grade span. By 1984, for the first time, there were more U.S. schools serving grades 6-7-8 only (3,800) than grades 7-8-9 only (3,200).

Obviously, moving grade levels around and putting up signs that say "Middle School" don't create a new pedagogical creature. A "real" middle school has a distinctive philosophy.

University of Florida education professor Paul George examined 150 middle-level programs, looking for the characteristics that make a middle school effective.

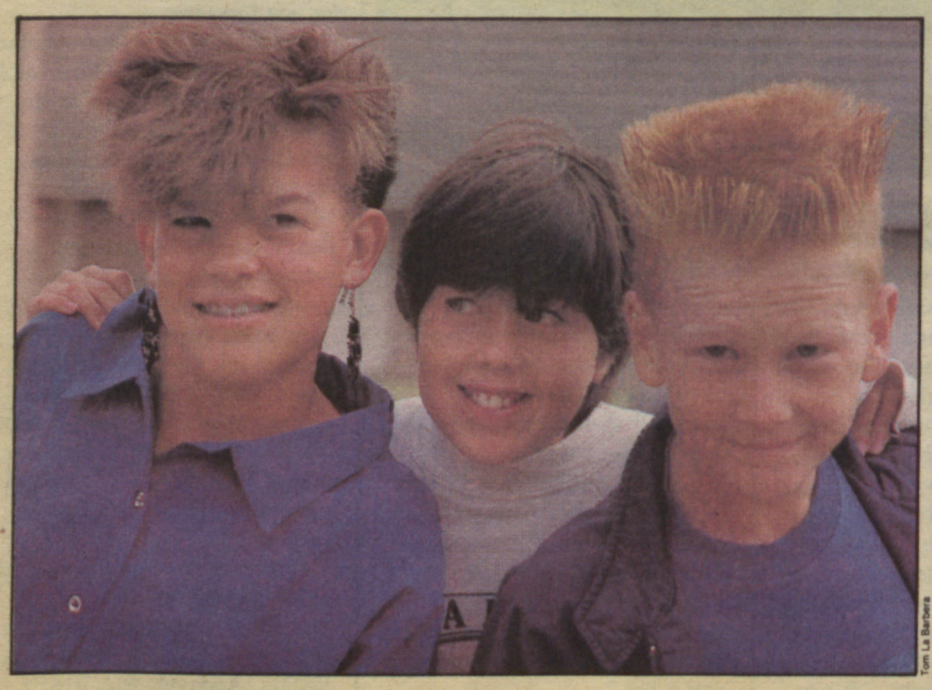
"It isn't curriculum per se," George contends. "But the research clearly shows that certain strategies work better for early adolescents than others."

One such strategy is to create smallness within bigness. "You have to keep schools big for the sake of cost-effectiveness," George explains, "but you must chop them into small groups whose members—students and teachers—have a sense of togetherness."

He believes the chief strategy for achieving this smallness is to put four or five academic teachers on an *interdisciplinary team* that works with 125-150 students—all sixth graders, say. The teams meet daily to discuss scheduling, common discipline problems, and sometimes joint academic projects.

Jeri Medina, language chair at Risley Middle School, says: "When you have a common planning period to talk about the same kids, you're not only more efficient, you can integrate the material you're teaching in all subjects."

The Anacapa Middle School in Ventura, Calif.—scene of the photos on these pages—achieves smallness in the opposite way. Sixth grade teachers teach core subjects in self-contained classrooms, much as in elementary school.



. . . THE MISSING LINK

Tom La Barbera

You Can Survive Teaching Middle School If You Say *Yes* to Six of the Following:

► You like kids who are totally lost for half the year—who can't remember their locker combinations or your name.

► You bristle when anyone refers to your students as "kneegrabbers."

► You can create a new curriculum every year, since what works one month—or even one day—may not work the next.

► You get a big kick out of silly kids who act as if they're somewhere between 7 and 30.

► You have the patience of Job, the energy of Mary Lou Retton, and at least partial recall of some of the lyrics to Van Halen's "Jump."

► You can overcome your instinctive fear of 11-year-olds.

► You can name two varieties of mousse.

► Your spouse thinks you get more like a seventh grader every year.

► You can't tell the difference between a 10-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl—and don't care.

► You're willing to trade independence for efficiency and moral support—that is, teach in a team.

► You always have Kleenex and a bag of red hots within reach.

Tom La Barbera

Another strategy that distinguishes effective middle schools is *teacher-based guidance*. Ken McEwin, an education professor who follows middle school developments from Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., explains the underlying premise: "For all early adolescents, values and personality are in flux. So each child needs to be known well by at least one professional adult."

Tom La Barbera

Teacher-based guidance is a deliberate attempt to have that professional adult be a teacher. A typical arrangement has a group of 25 to 30 students meet daily with the same teacher for 15 minutes. During this time the teacher might, for example, give a lesson designed to help students deflect negative peer pressures. Whatever the approach, the teacher is always there, ready to be consulted.

The middle school philosophy rejects sophisticated extracurricular activities in favor of more "kid stuff," such as after-school dances and skating parties. Just getting rid of the ninth grade in itself eliminates much precocious activity, according to University of Arizona psychologist Hershel Thornburg. "Seventh and eighth graders in the same school with ninth graders get involved in more complicated behavior, such as drugs and sexuality, than they would without them," he says.

Where they can get away with it, middle schools also get rid of interscholastic sports. In their stead, they encourage gung-ho activities—including teams with names and mascots—by small academic groups. Or, as at Anacapa, teams called the "Bloodsuckers" and the "Punkers" emerge spontaneously in homerooms.

For teachers, probably the biggest problem with middle schools isn't *being* there but *adjusting to going* there. The transition period can be unsettling.

Teachers who haven't taught in teams are often apprehensive about the shift. Anacapa sixth grade teacher John Weiss, who's also president of the Ventura Unified Education Association, recalls: "I was reluctant to leave the elementary school because of the flexibility of a self-contained class."

"As it's turned out," he adds, "I still teach everything I taught before except art, music, science, and phys ed. That's better for the kids, who now have specialized teachers in those subjects."

Teachers and Association leaders who've been through a transition to middle schools advise those who follow to make sure their districts—

► Give workshops and arrange site visits to working middle schools for administrators, teachers, and parents.

► Put both teachers and administrators on transition planning committees.

► Use an equitable formula agreed to by the Association for reassigning junior high and elementary teachers.

► Provide staff with in-service training for new arrangements such as teaming.

A sure sign that middle schools are well entrenched in America's education system is the variety of supporting institutions they've spawned in their 15-year existence. At last count, in 1981, some 160 colleges offered at least courses, if not a degree, in middle school education. Many offer master's degrees; the University of Arizona, a doctorate.

The existence of these college programs is probably closely related to state certification requirements. Some 26 states now offer middle school certification; in 11, it's mandatory for academic subject teachers in middle-level schools.

According to psychologist Thornburg, the best middle school training programs rest on the "social science model" of teacher education. Which implies, he says, fewer methods courses and more courses that foster understanding of adolescents (humanities, anthropology, psychology).

A three-tier system—K-5 elementary, 6-8 middle school, and 9-12 high school—is becoming standard across the country. This development promises a better fit between student needs and school design than is offered by current models, especially those with 7-9 junior highs. And that promise will likely be fulfilled—if kids will hold still and not outgrow their schools. . . or let their schools outgrow them.

—Nancy R. Needham

Resources

All Grown Up and No Place To Go (1984) and ***The Hurried Child*** (1981) by David Elkind. Both from Addison-Wesley.

Handbook for Middle School Teaching by P.S. George and G. D. Lawrence. Scott-Foresman, 1982.

Middle Grades Assessment Program, Center for Early Adolescence, Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, NC 27510.

National Association of Secondary School Principals, Council on Middle Level Education, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091: *An Agenda for Excellence at the Middle School Level*, 1985, $5.

National Middle School Association. P.O. Box 14882, Columbus, OH 43214: *Middle School Journal*, $15 a year; *The Team Process in the Middle School: A Handbook for Teachers* by E. Merenbloom, 1983, $5.95; *Evidence for the Middle School* by P. S. George, 1985, $5.95.

NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516: *Decision-Making Skills for Middle School Students* by S. Bergmann and G. Rudman (1528-2-10-D), 1985, $7.95; *The Middle School: A Bridge Between Elementary and Secondary Schools* by S. Kohut (1038-8-00-D), 1976, $2.50. Ask about the Middle School Training Program.

Successful Schools for Young Adolescents by J. Lipsitz. Transaction, 1984.

The Bubblegum Years: Sticking with Kids from 9-13 by H. D. Thornburg, 1979. HELP Books, 1201 E. Calle Elena, Tucson, AZ 85718. $7.

The Exemplary Middle School by W. M. Alexander and P.S. George. Holt, 1981.

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Meet:

Linda W. Andrews

Buzzin', Hummin', and Strummin' Along

In the one-and-a-half-acre field behind her ranch home in rural Ashland, Va., Association member Linda Andrews raises vegetables, fruit trees, and bees. In her Henrico County classroom, she keeps her 25 third graders every bit as busy as her bees. If the youngsters aren't writing book reports or singing about addends and sums as Andrews accompanies them on her guitar, they're growing beans and broccoli.

Andrews is a native of Virginia's Henrico County and a product of its schools. She's spent her 15 years in the profession teaching at Dumbarton Elementary School, located in a suburban area north of Richmond.

NEA Today *staff writer Diane Dismuke recently spent a day talking with Andrews in her classroom and in her home.*

Why do you feel the need to share aspects of your own life with your students?
Most of my students live in small apartments with no room for gardens, so I try to help them experience what they're missing. Once we planted string beans in a big bucket. We'd just finished reading *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and those beans grew and grew like the beans in the story. I did everything I could to stake them, but finally I had to hang four or five strings from the ceiling that they could grow on. They not only grew along the strings—they even bloomed! The kids were thrilled; they'd never seen anything like it.

When the beans were six to eight inches long, we picked them, washed them, and asked the cafeteria workers to prepare them. That day, each child's lunch included a piece of classroom-grown bean.

Are there other parts of your rural life that you share with your class?
I teach them about bees. And this year for the first time I shared my bee lesson with other teachers in the county by conducting a one-day seminar.

To introduce the youngsters to bees, I decorate a bulletin board with photos of bees and blurbs about their lives. We talk about why bees have the colors they do and what roles the queen, the workers, and the drones play.

What happens next?
I bring to class the protective outfit I wear when working hives. The children enjoy seeing me get into it—over my already bulky outfit that includes a T-shirt, long-sleeved flannel shirt, and thick jeans.

Then I open an empty hive that I've brought into the classroom. I show the children a frame where the bees have stored nectar and honey, and a hive tool I use when working with active hives. The frame usually contains some propolis—that's the wax that bees manufacture—that the children can examine. They also see a frame in which a queen laid eggs and workers raised bees.

Do the kids ever get to see an active hive?
If hive conditions are right, I bring the children to my home. As soon as they arrive, I stand along the edge of the garden and warn them that if they make any noise the bees will think they're flowers and come over to investigate. They don't utter a sound.

Then my husband and I open a hive and subdue the bees by using a smoker that releases billows of fumes over the entrance. That done, we take out a frame and detach any clinging bees with a small brush. When they fly off, I show the children where the frame contains honey. If I can remove a frame containing different types of larvae from the bee nursery beforehand, I show them that, too.

Do they sample the honey?
That comes next, when we take the frame containing the honey into my small kitchen and invite everyone to crowd in.

I show the children how to remove the caps that hold the liquid honey in the frame and put the frame in an extractor. Extractors are like old-fashioned ice cream makers—they hold the frame steady while we turn the handle to release the honey by centrifugal force.

Then we look into the extractor to see how much honey we have. One frame yields anywhere from two to three pounds.

Finally, we taste some honey—not what we've just spun out, because that has to "set" for a day or two—but some that I've already bottled.

Back in class, I conduct a question-and-answer session about the visit to make sure the kids understand what they saw. Ideally, I hope they've learned not only how dependent we are on the pollination process, but also practical lessons about the dangers of swatting a bee and simple first aid for stings.

Do you take your students on other field trips?
We usually visit a local spider museum and the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Last year we also toured a local radio station at the invitation of a disc jockey.

How did that come about?
Our district's curriculum includes career awareness. Usually I invite people from the community to visit and tell the students about their jobs. When the disc jockey came to class, the students and I greeted him with a song we'd composed about his morning show. He invited us to visit the broadcasting studio and, while there, record the song so he could play it over the air. The kids loved that!

We also wrote a song for the bus company that takes us on our field trips. Together with our principal, we visited the company's office and sang the song for all the employees.

Is music one of your hobbies?
I've always sung in my church choir, and I was a member of my junior high school chorus. A few years ago I learned to play the guitar by taking a noncredit course offered by the county. I still can't read a note; I play by chords. But that's let me bring music into my classroom.

How do you do that?
By leading the children in songs that help them learn arithmetic, language arts, and science. I found some songs about math that let the youngsters fill in addends and sums as they sing along. When we study punctuation, I teach them a song about statements and questions, and the proper punctuation for each. Our school's music teacher works with me.

Sometimes we sing solely for pleasure. During the hot days of May and early June, for instance, I take the kids out on the front lawn under a tree and we sing.

Are today's kids different from the ones you taught 15 years ago?
Today my students expect me to do many things for them. They have a difficult time thinking for themselves and being independent. When I first started teaching, third graders were able to do an assignment in a limited amount of time. Today if you tell them they've got 10 minutes to read a page, they usually haven't even started reading at the end of that time.

I think part of the problem is too much exposure to television. Children are so used to being amused by this interesting babysitter that they have problems expressing themselves. I also feel that parents need to take time to listen to their children.

What can teachers do to encourage their students?
One thing I do is stand in the doorway as they leave and give each child a handshake or a hug, as each prefers. I also try to whisper something private to each one.

This way they leave with a positive attitude. For a child who's struggled all day, it's a pat on the back; it says that I appreciate the hard work and, I hope, encourages the child to continue trying.

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Primary Schools of Mexico. Robert Miller. Describes aspects of the Mexican educational system of interest to U.S. school staff who have students from Mexico. 1984 ed. 52 pp. $4.95. Paradox Press, P.O. Box 1438, Los Gatos, CA 95031.

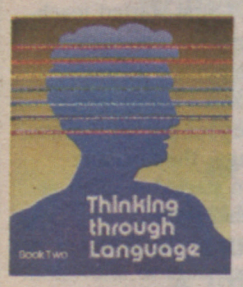
SAFETY

5 Things a Young Adult Can Do About Drunk Driving. National Student Educational Fund. Shows how to think ahead and avoid becoming a drunk driver—or the passenger of a drunk driver. For free single copies and information about multiple copies, write U.S. Student Association, 1012 14th St., N.W., Suite 403, Washington, DC 20005.

We Love You, Buckle Up (preschool); ***A Safer Way for Every Day*** (K-3); ***Three Seconds to Safety*** (grades 3-5); ***Beating the Odds*** (secondary health education); ***Restrain Yourself*** (driver education). Instructional packets with reproducible student activity sheets, teacher guide, and poster. Free (request by title). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Occupant Protection, NTS-13, Washington, DC 20590.

ENGLISH

Thinking Through Language. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Describes a variety of individual, small-group, and whole-class activities to help secondary students develop higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and inference. Book One (junior high), 104 pp., stock no. 25360-015, $4.95. Book Two (senior high), 75 pp., stock no. 43156-015, $4.95. Teacher Guide, 57 pp., stock no. 50152-015, $3.95. (Discounts available on classroom sets.) NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.



FILM/VIDEO

Business/Distributive Education/ Economics; Career Guidance/The Arts; Physical Education/Driver Education/ Health and Hygiene; Vocational Agriculture. Four new catalogs list more than 250 free-loan films and videos for secondary students. Free. Modern Talking Picture Service, Direct Mail Dept., 5000 Park St., N., St. Petersburg, FL 33709.

SCIENCE

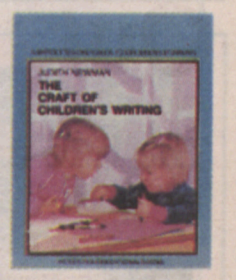
Alternative Energy: A Guide to Free Information for Educators. Janet A. White. Lists more than 200 free publications, including teaching materials and nontechnical background references, on renewable energy resources and energy conservation. 32 pp. $4 prepaid (bulk rates are available). Center for Renewable Resources, 1001 Connecticut Ave., Suite 638, Washington, DC 20036.

GUIDANCE

Peterson's Engineering/High-Tech Student's Handbook: Preparing for Careers of the Future. David R. Reyes-Guerra and Alan M. Fischer. Surveys the fields of engineering and engineering education and lists colleges that offer accredited engineering programs. 120 pp. $8.95. At bookstores, or for $1.25 more for postage and handling from Peterson's Guides, P.O. Box 2123, Princeton, NJ 08540.

WRITING

The Craft of Children's Writing. Judith Newman. Uses examples from real first graders' writing to illustrate the concepts of *intention*, *organization*, *experimentation*, and *orchestration*—elements of the learning-to-write process. 72 pp. $5. At bookstores, or prepaid from Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 70 Court St., Portsmouth, NH 03801.



The "Free or Inexpensive" feature is included in* NEA Today *as a service to readers. Items listed are selected by the editors at their discretion from review copies submitted by publishers. Since this column is editorial matter rather than advertising, there is no charge for listings.

ADVERTISEMENT

In fact, our kids' health is declining.

The real problem is that most kids don't know how to stay healthy. They have poor habits in every way—physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.

School programs attacking individual problems may help but just aren't enough, so...

Metropolitan Life Foundation announces "Healthy Me."

"Healthy Me" is a multi-million dollar initiative, the first ever developed by the private sector to encourage comprehensive health education programs by schools and communities.

Cash awards are offered by Metropolitan Life Foundation to schools with exemplary programs and to community groups that actively promote them.

For more information contact "Healthy Me," Health and Safety Education (16UV), One Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010-3690.

These are our kids and they're our future. What could be more important?

Metropolitan Life Foundation

SALLY BROWN: © 1960 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

SOUNDING BOARD

The Great Stampede Out to Pasture

The lure of early retirement may be illusory.

by Daniel Dyer

On the evening news I recently watched an interview with an 80-year-old West Virginia mountain farmer who was plowing a field behind his mule. For 60 years he had plowed that field in just that way. When asked by the reporter when he was going to retire, the farmer responded with an amused look and one crisp sentence: "I'll retire when I can't stand up."

Unfortunately for our profession, many teachers are now retiring long before they can't stand up, often when they're still sprinting through the most productive, effective, and rewarding years of their careers. In my state (Ohio), local school boards are now *encouraging* early retirements by offering incentives designed to entice even the most committed teachers.

Among the offerings: outright gifts of thousands of dollars and offers to purchase up to five years of service credit (permitting 30-year veterans to receive 35-year benefits).

The State Teachers Retirement System recently sent me an 11-page list of roughly 250 Ohio school districts electing to participate in what is called the "Early Retirement Incentive Plan." The Old Rush of '85 is on.

Superficially, such plans appear to benefit everyone:

► Teachers can retire early with full benefits and begin "enjoying their golden years" before Father Time launches his final assault.

► School boards can relieve themselves of the financial burden of the higher salaries accorded veteran teachers. In the district where I teach, for example, the break-even point for the board is about $26,000. If replacements for early retirees are hired for less than that sum, the board is saving money. Eleven faculty members chose early retirement this year, saving the district approximately $60,000—no small sum in a system that employs only about 100 teachers.

► Young teachers, who have had a tough time finding employment in these recent years of "oversupply," now enjoy improved opportunities to find an open door and begin their careers.

► School districts whose bloodstreams have been clogged with cholesterol (in the form of tired, stagnant teachers) can rejuvenate themselves with transfusions of young blood.

Sounds great. In our profession it's not often that the desires of weary career teachers, the aspirations of eager classroom novices, and the needs of impecunious school systems dovetail so perfectly.

But I believe that early retirement programs, if they became pervasive, would do much to damage the quality of public education. And the damage will not likely end there. Dedicated teachers, enticed into retiring by financial incentives they simply cannot afford to ignore, may find themselves irrevocably cut off from the most meaningful and rewarding part of their lives.

Consider:

► To some extent, those who support such programs exhibit what could be called the "toy-soldier mentality." In this view, teachers are largely interchangeable—one can do the job just about as well as another. And if one costs $20,000 less, so much the better. Such a conception might make a kind of simple-minded sense in the military—or in an assembly line—but in schooling the notion is arrant nonsense.

► Early retirement is what loggers call a "clear-cut": everything is removed—live wood as well as dead, solid timber as well as weak. School boards cannot issue selective invitations: the same offer extends to incompetents and superstars alike. As a result, schools lose the good as well as the bad and the ugly.

In my own building it happened that two of the finest educators I have ever known—both in their early 50s, both still far more energetic and creative than most of the rest of us—elected to retire. One was replaced by a beginning teacher, the other by someone with only a few years' experience. Penny-wise, pound-foolish.

► Underpinning many of these programs are ill-considered and faulty assumptions about what teachers are and how they ought to be employed—or *de*ployed. Although talk about "differentiated staffing" and "career ladders" abounds, there remains across the country a disheartening, dulling sameness to a teacher's day.

I am now serving my 20th year in the classroom, yet my assignment is indistinguishable from what it was back in 1966: I teach six classes, every day, same time, same station. Small wonder people can't wait to retire! A T-shirt I saw the other day expresses the sentiment more succinctly: I LOVE MY JOB—IT'S THE WORK I HATE.

We desperately need to be more imaginative in the use of faculty, less restricted by traditional conceptions about how teachers ought to spend their days—and careers. In major-league baseball, for example, the old-timers become managers or third-base coaches or scouts or broadcasters. But in education, we cling to a much more primitive notion of a career continuum. You either teach or you don't—you're in or you're out.

A recent retiree showed up one day to visit our school and was greeted by one insensitive former colleague with "Well, what are *you* doing here?" These words to a person who had devoted her life to the children in that building!

It seems obvious that schools ought to endeavor to *keep* teachers as long as they want to—and are able to—contribute to the educational program. But, variety being the spice, school districts must offer employment options to teachers throughout their careers, especially to those talented, dedicated, and inspiring individuals who have devoted their lives to education.

Imaginative districts could, for example—

► Create alumni offices in public schools, staffed by career educators.

► Establish emeritus status for deserving teachers, then hire them to serve as consultants, as advisers to students (and teachers), as supervisers of instruction, as curriculum planners.

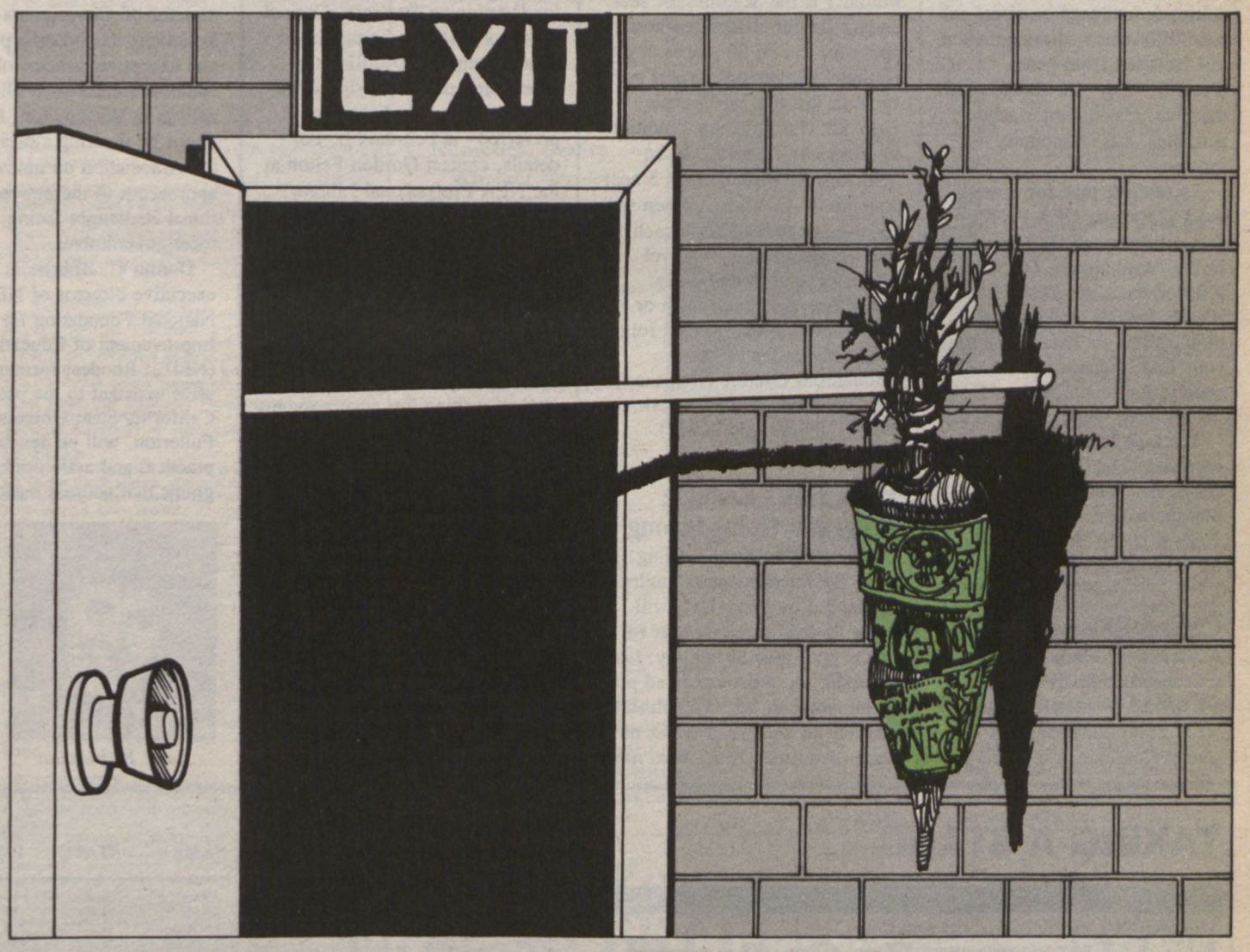
► Employ teachers to be "scouts" for the district, sending them around to local universities to interview, observe, and evaluate young talent.

► Institute a "teacher-at-large" program, letting the same person teach, say, creative dramatics to first graders, journalism to middle schoolers, and contemporary literature to high school seniors.

► Employ teachers to use their skills in photography, writing, counseling, gardening, cooking—whatever—to benefit the school and community.

► Develop teacher exchange programs (within school districts, between school districts, among states, among nations).

► Create an "extramural" program that would pay teachers to take students around the community, the country, the world.



If teaching is an art, then teacher "retirement" is a ludicrous concept. Painters, writers, musicians, sculptors, and other artists do not simply quit their careers, buy a Winnebago, and set out for Sun City or Yellowstone. They continue to paint, write, or perform until mind and body refuse or the will withers.

Accordingly, we in public education must abandon our inhumane, wasteful, and above all bizarre equation of retirement with banishment. For retired teachers, the alternative to the classroom need not be exile from the educational world. We need to create ways to permit teachers to continue to participate in schooling until . . . well, until death do us part.

Association member Daniel Dyer teaches eighth grade English at Harmon Middle School in Aurora, Ohio. He's been teaching—and writing—for 20 years.

Your NEA

REACHING OUT

Minority Students Speak Out on Camera

An 18-minute videotape, *Special People...Special Needs*, featuring interviews with 11 Black, Hispanic, Indian, and Asian students at an Arlington, Va., high school, is now available for rent or purchase from the NEA Professional Library.

The teens discuss such difficulties as language barriers, cultural differences, discrimination, and isolation from peers. On the plus side, they talk about helpful teachers, friends, after-school activities, and community groups.

To rent the tape for a week, send $25 to the NEA Professional Library, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Ask for stock no. 7680-X-10-Y, specify type of tape desired (3/4", VHS, or Beta II), and list your first, second, and third choices for rental dates. Allow two to three weeks for delivery.

The tape is also available for purchase: $40 for NEA members (stock no. 7680-X-00-D) and $80 for nonmembers (stock no. 7680-X-20-D). It's not available for rebroadcast.

Calling ESP Members. . .

Association members who hold educational support positions are invited to attend a national NEA Educational Support Personnel Conference in April 1986.

The conference theme is "Politics and Power." Focus will be on use of politics and power to improve support staff wages and working conditions.

The conference will take place April 18-20 (Friday evening to Sunday noon) at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.

For more information contact the ESP program in the organizing office at NEA Center, 202/822-7102.

. . . and History Buffs

March 1 is the deadline for secondary school history teachers to apply for one of 20 places at the National Humanities Center's summer institute on "Fertile Ground: The Agrarian Tradition in American History," to be held June 16 through July 3 near Raleigh, N.C. Those chosen will receive stipends of $600 each and reimbursement of travel expenses, and free housing.

For an application form or more information, contact John O'Connor at the National Humanities Center, 7 Alexander Dr., Research Triangle Park, NC 27709 (919/549-0661).

Pizza Hut's Reading Program: Going Strong

Book It, an incentive reading program for elementary students sponsored by Pizza Hut, will enter its final three months for this school year in January.

Under the NEA-endorsed program, students who volunteer to participate must read books on their own time. Those who meet minimum monthly reading goals set by their teachers earn free pizzas; those who meet the goals for all three months receive merit award bookmarks.

For more information, contact Mike Jenkins at Pizza Hut, 9111 East Douglas, Wichita, KS 67201 (316/681-9016).

Wanted: Manuscripts On Critical Thinking . . .

The NEA Professional Library is seeking material for an upcoming anthology, *Teaching Strategies for Developing Students' Critical Thinking Skills*, to be published next September. Deadline for submission of manuscripts—previously unpublished ones are preferred—is February 3. For details, contact Gordon Felton at the NEA Professional Library, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

. . . and Kids' Views On Good Parenting

New York writer Michael Laser thanks everyone who sent him student writing last spring for his forthcoming book, *Children's Rules for Parents*—but says he still needs more material.

If you teach grade 1 through 9, think about asking your students to write down their advice on how parents should deal with children. Ideas may be silly or serious, in essay or list form. Send them to P.O. Box 1045, New York, NY 10028 by February 1. (Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want the work returned.)

MAKING NEWS

Ken Melley is now the director of NEA's newly combined office of Government Relations/ Political Affairs. Formerly director of Political Affairs (and originally a biology teacher in Connecticut), Melley will coordinate the Association's efforts to enact pro-education legislation—and to elect candidates who will support that legislation. **Linda Tarr-Whelan**, NEA's former director of Government Relations, has become president and executive director of the National Center for Policy Alternatives in Washington, D.C. She'll be working closely with the Association on innovative approaches to the new educational challenges facing state and local governments. . .

Donna C. Rhodes is the new executive director of NEA's National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE). Rhodes, formerly executive assistant to the president of California State University at Fullerton, will be developing practical and action-oriented programs that address basic classroom problems. Stay tuned to *NEA Today* for more on NFIE's new lineup of projects. . .

NEA Executive Director **Don Cameron** addressed the Conference for Journalists on Education Issues 1985 in late October. The conference, on "What Should Be Taught and Who Should Pay," was one of a series sponsored by the Washington, D.C., Journalism Center to help journalists develop a broader understanding of key issues in the news. . .

NEA and the National Association of Secondary School Principals are cooperating on a new project to improve instruction in secondary schools. An eight-member joint task force will pool its expertise to identify specific responsibilities of teachers and principals to ensure successful student learning, then field-test its ideas on teachers and principals at four locations across the country. A final report is due in early spring. Association representatives on the panel are **Janet Robertson** of Edmonds, Wash., **Jerry Hong** of Blackfoot, Idaho, and **Darlene Frazier** of Boone, Iowa. **Barbara Yentzer**, NEA's special staff assistant for education and labor organizations, co-chairs the group.

Janet Robertson

Jerry Hong

Darlene Frazier

TAKING A STAND

NEA Directors Go On Record

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, NEA must publish all roll-call votes of the Board. There were three such votes at the October 4-5 Board meeting.

Subjects of Votes:

#1: Authorized the establishment of a $10,000 grant (to be taken from contingency funds) to support research into the relationship of nutrition to the learning process. 115 yes, 4 no, 8 nonrespondents, 1 vacancy, 5 absent (2 other absentees replaced by alternates).

#2: Appropriated $162,500 from the 1985-86 contingency fund for the Texas State Teachers Association-NEA project regarding teacher testing. 119 yes, 0 no, 8 nonrespondents, 1 vacancy, 5 absent (2 other absentees replaced by alternates).

#3: Authorized an appropriation of $25,095 from contingency funds to fund all NEA members active in the Association and serving as commissioners to the Education Commission of the States (ECS) to attend the annual ECS meeting, and to cover the registration fee at that meeting for the president (or his/her designee) of any state Association that does not have an ECS commissioner. 124 yes, 1 no, 3 nonrespondents, 1 vacancy, 3 absent (1 other absentee replaced by an alternate).

Key:

Y—voted in favor of the issue
N—voted in opposition to the issue
NR—vote not recorded on the issue
O—absent from the meeting
V—vacancy
*****—alternate director
******—submitted statement of position

NAME	STATE	Roll Call # 1	2	3
Harris	Ala.	Y	Y	Y
McDanal	Ala.	O	O	O
**McDonald	Ala.	Y	NR	Y
Stitham	Alaska	Y	Y	Y
Federoff	Ariz.	Y	Y	Y
Kindler	Ariz.	Y	Y	Y
Pondexter	Ark.	Y	Y	Y
Brooks	Calif.	Y	Y	Y
**Gooden	Calif.	Y	NR	NR
**Johnson	Calif.	NR	NR	NR
Pavey	Calif.	Y	Y	Y
**Potter	Calif.	NR	Y	Y
Reising	Calif.	Y	Y	Y
Walden	Calif.	Y	Y	Y
Williams	Calif.	Y	Y	Y
**Wittman	Calif.	Y	NR	Y
Morris	Colo.	Y	Y	Y
Wright	Colo.	Y	Y	Y
Gagliardi	Conn.	Y	Y	Y
Jacaruso	Conn.	Y	Y	Y
Smith	Del.	Y	Y	Y
Zachariah	D.C.	Y	Y	Y
Gordon	Fla.	Y	Y	Y
Holmes	Fla.	Y	Y	Y
Aikens	Ga.	Y	Y	Y
Eller	Ga.	Y	Y	Y
Lum	Hawaii	Y	Y	Y
Hovey	Idaho	Y	Y	Y
Johan	Ill.	Y	Y	Y
Price	Ill.	Y	Y	Y
Smith, J.	Ill.	Y	Y	Y
Smith, M.	Ill.	Y	Y	Y
Hogan	Ind.	Y	Y	Y
Miller	Ind.	Y	Y	Y
Gilchrist	Iowa	Y	Y	Y
Mesicek	Iowa	Y	NR	Y
Cole	Kansas	O	O	Y
Gunter	Kansas	Y	Y	Y
*Schmitt	Kansas	Y	Y	—
Carrico	Ky.	Y	Y	Y
Morton	Ky.	Y	Y	Y
Falcon	La.	Y	Y	Y
Green	La.	Y	Y	Y
McGary	Maine	Y	Y	Y
Jablinske	Md.	Y	Y	Y
Kuker-Kihl	Md.	Y	Y	Y
LaPlante	Mass.	Y	Y	Y
Matulaitis	Mass.	Y	Y	Y
Todd	Mass.	Y	Y	Y
Brown	Mich.	Y	Y	Y
Davenport	Mich.	Y	Y	Y
Eckloff	Mich.	Y	Y	Y
Swanson	Mich.	Y	Y	Y
Zook	Mich.	N	Y	Y
Lindstrom	Minn.	Y	Y	Y
Tigner	Minn.	Y	Y	Y
Armstrong	Miss.	Y	Y	Y
Jung	Mo.	Y	Y	Y
Myers	Mont.	Y	Y	Y
Rea	Nebr.	Y	Y	Y
Anderson	Nev.	Y	Y	N
Mitchell	N.H.	Y	Y	Y
**Goldman	N.J.	NR	Y	Y
Johnson	N.J.	Y	Y	Y
Moore	N.J.	Y	Y	Y
Peters	N.J.	Y	Y	Y
Walters	N.J.	Y	Y	Y
Eachus	N. Mex.	Y	Y	Y
Anderson	N.Y.	N	Y	Y
Cleveland	N.Y.	Y	Y	Y
Banks	N.C.	O	O	O
Cummings	N.C.	Y	Y	Y
Graves	N.C.	Y	Y	Y
Gallagher	N. Dak.	Y	Y	Y
Augusta	Ohio	Y	Y	Y
Dolgosh	Ohio	Y	Y	Y
Dorsey	Ohio	N	Y	Y
Jones	Ohio	Y	Y	Y
VanGundy	Ohio	Y	Y	Y
**Black	Okla.	NR	Y	Y
**Jewell	Okla.	NR	NR	Y
Cornell	Oreg.	Y	Y	Y
Lee	Oreg.	Y	Y	Y
Bentz	OV	O	O	O
*Rollins	OV	NR	NR	NR
D'Eramo	Pa.	Y	Y	Y
Epting	Pa.	Y	Y	Y
**Huntley	Pa.	NR	NR	Y
Mechlowitz	Pa.	Y	Y	Y
Mitchell	Pa.	Y	Y	Y
Lebron	P.R.	Y	Y	Y
Vacancy	P.R.	O	O	O
**Blanda	R.I.	NR	Y	Y
Watson	S.C.	Y	Y	Y
Dangel	S. Dak.	Y	Y	Y
Cage	Tenn.	Y	Y	Y
Wallace	Tenn.	Y	Y	Y
Hughes	Texas	Y	Y	Y
Jennings	Texas	Y	Y	Y
Scott	Texas	Y	Y	Y
Stacey	Texas	Y	Y	Y
Taylor	Utah	Y	Y	Y
Scott	Vt.	Y	Y	Y
Gant	Va.	Y	Y	Y
Mika	Va.	Y	Y	Y
Wilson	Va.	Y	Y	Y
Amos	Wash.	Y	Y	Y
Horne	Wash.	Y	Y	Y
Miller	Wash.	Y	Y	Y
Johnson	W. Va.	Y	Y	Y
Carlin	Wisc.	Y	Y	Y
Johnson	Wisc.	Y	Y	Y
Schleife	Wisc.	Y	Y	Y
Pershin	Wyo.	Y	Y	Y
Clanton	Student	Y	Y	Y
Cook	Student	Y	Y	Y
Santora	Retired	Y	Y	Y
Stockman	Retired	Y	Y	Y
Westbrook	Retired	Y	Y	Y
Booth	At Large	Y	Y	Y
Marrone	At Large	Y	Y	Y
McDougle	At Large	O	O	Y
Renshaw	At Large	Y	Y	Y
Treibley	At Large	N	Y	Y
Chase	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Foglia	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Lewis	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Mack	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Obermeyer	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Wilson	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Bradshaw	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Geiger	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y
Futrell	Ex. Com.	Y	Y	Y

**The following directors were not present for Roll Call Vote #1 but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Nadine Potter (Calif.), Evan M. Goldman (N.J.), Bettie J. Black and Nancy L. Jewell (Okla.), Alton A. Huntley (Penn.), Sylvia C. Blanda (R.I.)

The following directors were not present for Roll Call Vote #2 but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Tom McDonald (Ala.), Roger A. Gooden, Roy A. Johnson, and Wilma E. Wittman (Calif.), John G. Mesicek (Iowa), Nancy L. Jewell (Okla.), Alton A. Huntley (Penn.).

The following directors were not present for Roll Call Vote #3 but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Roger A. Gooden and Roy A. Johnson (Calif.).

PROTECTING YOU FROM LIABILITY

As an NEA member, you're insured against loss of up to $1 million if you're ever sued in connection with your work. NEA's liability program offers these coverages: civil negligence, $1,000,000; civil rights violation, $250,000; criminal charge (if exonerated), $25,000 for attorneys' fees; bail bond, $1,000; property damage, $250.

NEA Educators Employment Liability Program
Summary Plan Description

I. INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this summary is to inform NEA members about the structure and principal provisions of the 1985-86 NEA Educators Employment Liability Program, referred to as the "EEL Program." Please remember that this is only a summary. If there is any conflict or inconsistency between this summary and the underlying contracts and documents, the contracts and documents must be controlling.

The "EEL Program" is an insurance plan designed to protect you, as an NEA member, against financial liabilities incurred as a result of certain kinds of accidents occurring in the course of your employment, including certain costs of providing a legal defense to claims against you.

The Program is administered by NEA and its state affiliates and is underwritten by the Horace Mann Insurance Company. The entire premium for the plan is paid by NEA.

This summary is being furnished in compliance with the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). As participants in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA. These rights are summarized in Part VIII of this summary.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION
PLAN NAME/SPONSOR: The Plan is generally known as the NEA Educators Employment Liability Program ("EEL Program"), and is sponsored by the National Education Association of the United States (NEA), 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, for its members.

TYPE OF PLAN/IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS: The EEL Program is a welfare plan providing accident liability insurance and reimbursement for attorney fees and court costs. NEA has been assigned identification number 530115260 by the Internal Revenue Service. NEA has assigned NUMBER 523 to this Plan.

ADMINISTRATION/PLAN ADMINISTRATOR: The EEL Program is administered by NEA pursuant to resolutions adopted by its Board of Directors and Executive Committee and pursuant to agreements between Horace Mann and NEA. Communications concerning any aspect of the Program should be addressed to Educators Employment Liability Program, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. The telephone number is (202)822-7080.

SERVICE OF PROCESS: If legal action involving the Program is necessary, legal process may be served upon the Plan Administrator. The agent for service of legal process is Lynn Ohman, c/o NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

TRUSTEES/COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT: Since all assets of the Program consist of insurance contracts and funds held by a licensed insurance company, there is no trust under the Program and no trustees. In addition, the EEL Program has not been established and is not being maintained pursuant to the terms of any collective bargaining agreement with any employer.

III. ELIGIBILITY
MEMBERS: All active, life, retired life, and student NEA members are automatically covered by the EEL Program.

IV. COVERAGE
ACCIDENT LIABILITY: Under the EEL Program, you are entitled to reimbursement for damages, up to a maximum of $1,000,000, and legal expenses incurred to defend you, as a result of certain "accidents" which occur in the course of your employment. An "accident" is an act which inflicts damages to someone other than yourself. The phrase "course of employment" means while you are engaged in activity which was undertaken pursuant to the terms of the employment contract or at the request or approval of your supervisor. (Coverage A)

EXCLUSIONS: You are not covered if the suit against you is—
- brought by another employee of an educational unit;
- based upon liability which you have expressly assumed under any contract or agreement;
- seeking solely declaratory, injunctive, and/or similar nonmonetary relief;
- any violation of the criminal law, except civil damages arising out of your use of corporal punishment.

Certain activities are also excluded from coverage under the EEL Program, including:
- the rendering of medical or similar services except by licensed school nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychological therapists, or guidance counselors;
- a publication or utterance of defamatory statements;
- ownership, maintenance, operation, use, loading, or unloading of any vehicles **except**:

1) driver training instructors who are riding as passengers in the course of their work;
2) vocational education instructors engaged in teaching shop; and
3) members supervising students entering or exiting a school bus.

- misuse of public and/or private funds;
- sale of food products or other goods manufactured by or under your supervision—except for home economics teachers and cafeteria workers, who are covered;
- use of firearms, except when physically restraining a student who is threatening others with firearms.

These are the major exclusions under this Program. Please consult the certificate of insurance for further details.

LEGAL AND DEFENSE FEES: You will be reimbursed for the following:
- Up to a maximum of $25,000 per occurrence for attorney's fees and expenses incurred in the defense of any criminal proceeding arising out of your employment except if the proceeding arises out of an action against another employee. Unless the proceeding results from your use of corporal punishment, you must be exonerated in order to receive reimbursement. (Coverage B)
- Up to $1,000 for bail bond premium as the result of an event occurring during your employment. (Coverage C)

ASSAULT-RELATED PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE: You will be paid up to $250 for the damage or destruction of your own property or property in your custody if you are assaulted at school or while engaged in an authorized school activity. Such damages must exceed coverage provided by any homeowner's policy, and there will be no coverage for damage or destruction of a vehicle of any kind or for any property owned, leased or rented by an educational unit. (Coverage D)

V. TERMINATION OF COVERAGE
Coverage under the EEL Program will be terminated or reduced under the following circumstances: If you cease to be an NEA member, or if NEA decides to discontinue the EEL Program as a whole. Termination will not affect amounts due for claims arising prior to termination.

VI. CONTRIBUTIONS
SOURCE/AMOUNT/MEDIUM: NEA pays the entire cost of the EEL Program. The amount is determined by the NEA and the insurance company.

This is an unfunded welfare plan. All contributions made by NEA are applied to pay the premiums on the insurance policy issued by Horace Mann.

PLAN YEAR: The Program's fiscal records are maintained on the basis of an accounting year which ends on August 31 of each calendar year.

VII. CLAIMS
INITIAL PROCEDURES: If there is a claim for any benefits under the Program, you are to contact your state association's EEL coordinator within a reasonable time period and provide a copy of any and all relevant legal documents and a summary of the incident. The state EEL coordinator will thereupon forward to you the appropriate forms to fill out.

If unable to contact your state association's EEL coordinator, send a copy of all legal documents and the description of the events directly to Horace Mann Insurance Company, One Horace Mann Plaza, Springfield, Illinois 62715.

REVIEW OF DENIED CLAIMS: If you or any other person making a claim under the Program and NEA or the insurance company do not agree that benefits are payable, or do not agree as to the amount of the benefits payable, you should clearly state your objection(s) in a letter to NEA within sixty (60) days of the event. Write to Lynn Ohman, Manager, NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

VIII. YOUR RIGHTS UNDER ERISA
As a participant in the EEL Program, you are entitled to certain rights and protections under ERISA, as follows:
- You have the right to examine, without charge, at the offices of NEA Legal Services, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036, all Program documents, including the insurance contract (with riders and amendments) with Horace Mann and the pertinent resolutions adopted by the NEA Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the administration of the Program. You may also examine, without charge, copies of all documents pertaining to the Program filed by NEA with the U.S. Department of Labor, such as detailed annual reports and plan descriptions.
- You have the right to obtain copies of all Program documents and other Program information upon written request to NEA Legal Services at the above address. NEA Legal Services may make a reasonable charge for the copies.
- You are entitled to summary financial reports for the year ending August 31, 1986 when they become available.

In addition to creating rights for you, ERISA imposes duties on NEA and Horace Mann in its operation of the EEL Program. NEA is a "fiduciary." It has a duty to operate the Program prudently and in your interest. No one can prevent you from obtaining the insurance benefits to which you are properly entitled under the Program or from exercising your rights under ERISA. If your claim for a benefit is denied in whole or in part, you must receive a written explanation from Horace Mann for the denial. You have the right to have Horace Mann review and reconsider your claims. Under ERISA, there are steps you can take to enforce your rights. For instance, if you request Program materials to which you are entitled under ERISA and do not receive them within 30 days, you may file suit in federal court. In such a case, the court may require NEA to provide the materials and pay you up to $100 a day until you receive the materials, unless the materials were not sent because of reasons beyond NEA's control. If you have a claim for benefits which is denied or ignored, in whole or in part, you may file suit in a state or federal court. If it should happen that Program fiduciaries misuse the Program's money, or if you are discriminated against for asserting your rights, you may seek assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor, or file suit in federal court. The court will decide who will pay court costs and legal fees. If you are successful, the court may order the person you have sued to pay these costs and fees. If you lose, the court may order you to pay these costs and fees, for example, if it finds your claim frivolous. If you have any questions about the EEL Program, contact NEA Legal Services. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, contact the nearest Area Office of the U.S. Labor Management Services Administration, Department of Labor.

ADVERTISEMENT

How To End The Drudgery of Grading

Remarkable new calculator has enabled over 10,000 teachers to grade quickly and effortlessly

For the nearly 3 million teachers across the country, grading is a dreaded aspect of an otherwise most rewarding profession.

Countless hours are spent converting back and forth between letters and numbers. Adding them. Averaging them. Verifying them. Then putting them altogether into final grades for each of your many students.

In short, grading robs you of valuable time that could be spent working with students, preparing classes or doing the things you want to do outside the classroom.

But thanks to an amazing new calculator, you can now put an end to tedious and time-consuming grading computations.

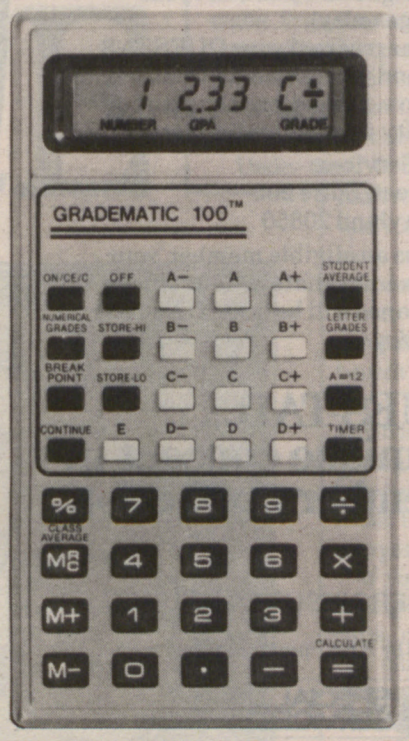
Letter and Numerical Grades

Whether you use letter grades, numerical scores or a combination of both, the GradeMatic 100 grading calculator will save you hours upon hours each marking period.

- **For letter grades** you enter directly on the patented letter-grade keyboard – just as you read them off a grade book. Then simply press the "Student Average" key and instantly the GradeMatic gives you the correct final grade.

It even allows you to "weight" assignments of different point values – without formulas.

- **For numerical grades you set** the high and low passing point totals – for a single assignment or semester's worth of tests and assignments – enter the students' scores and again simply press the "Student Average" key to find the proper grade – from your scale.
- **In either grading mode, you can** enter up to 99 grades per student and the calculator automatically keeps Class Averages for up to 99 students per class.
- **You can even time tests or** activities with GradeMatic's built-in Stop Watch/Timer Alarm (with 3-second buzzer).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GRADING GENIUS – The new GradeMatic 100 calculator performs tedious grading computations with the touch of a few buttons.

Convenient and Complete

And the GradeMatic lets you grade where you want and when you want. Measuring a mere 2¾ x 5¼ x ¼", it fits easily in your purse or pocket. It's also the last calculator you'll ever need since it performs standard math functions and even features percent, memory and battery-saving auto shut-off.

Best of all, it comes complete with everything you need to start grading quickly and effortlessly right away. Easy-to-follow instructions, 1-Year Warranty, replaceable batteries (avg. life 1,000 hrs.), and sturdy (brown) vinyl case are all included for the low price of $39.95.

With the time you save on your first marking period alone, the GradeMatic 100 will pay for itself. Plus it's tax deductible for teachers! And like the thousands of educators who already own this remarkable machine, you'll look forward to many years of carefree grading.

You may also add an optional fine-grain, stitched leather case (in Brown or Burgundy), or have your initials imprinted in rich gold on either kind of case.

Yours FREE!

but only if you order now...

As a special end-of-the-term promotion, we'll include one free SHIPS-838 four-function credit-card sized calculator with each GradeMatic 100. That's right — you get a second calculator absolutely free.

This is a limited time offer. So don't delay. Order your GradeMatic 100 grading calculator and get the SHIPS-838 absolutely FREE.

Order Risk-Free

What's more, you risk nothing by ordering the Grade-Matic 100. Because if for any reason you're not delighted with it, simply return it within two weeks and your money will be refunded in full.

So you can't go wrong. To order, simply fill out and return the coupon below to Calculated Industries, 2010 N. Tustin Ave., Suite B, Orange, CA 92665. Or call Toll Free 24 hours everyday (including Sunday), 1-800-854-8075 (in Calif., 1-800-231-0546) or (714) 921-1800.

Order your GradeMatic 100 today and end the drudgery of grading tomorrow.

(Clip and Mail Today!)

☐ **YES!** I want to end the drudgery of grading. Please rush the following order and include my FREE credit-card calculator.

Qty.	Product	Price (ea.)	Shpg. (ea.)	Total
	GradeMatic 100	$39.95	$3.50	
	Leather Case ☐ Brown ☐ Burg.	$10.00	—	
	Gold Initials	$1 ea. init.		

SAVE 15% – 5 or more just $37 ea. with FREE shipping to one location with one check or charge.

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Please Note: Leather cases with gold initials are, of course, not refundable.

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☐ Check enclosed for the entire amount of order including 6% tax in CA.
Charge to: ☐ VISA ☐ Master Card ☐ Am Exp
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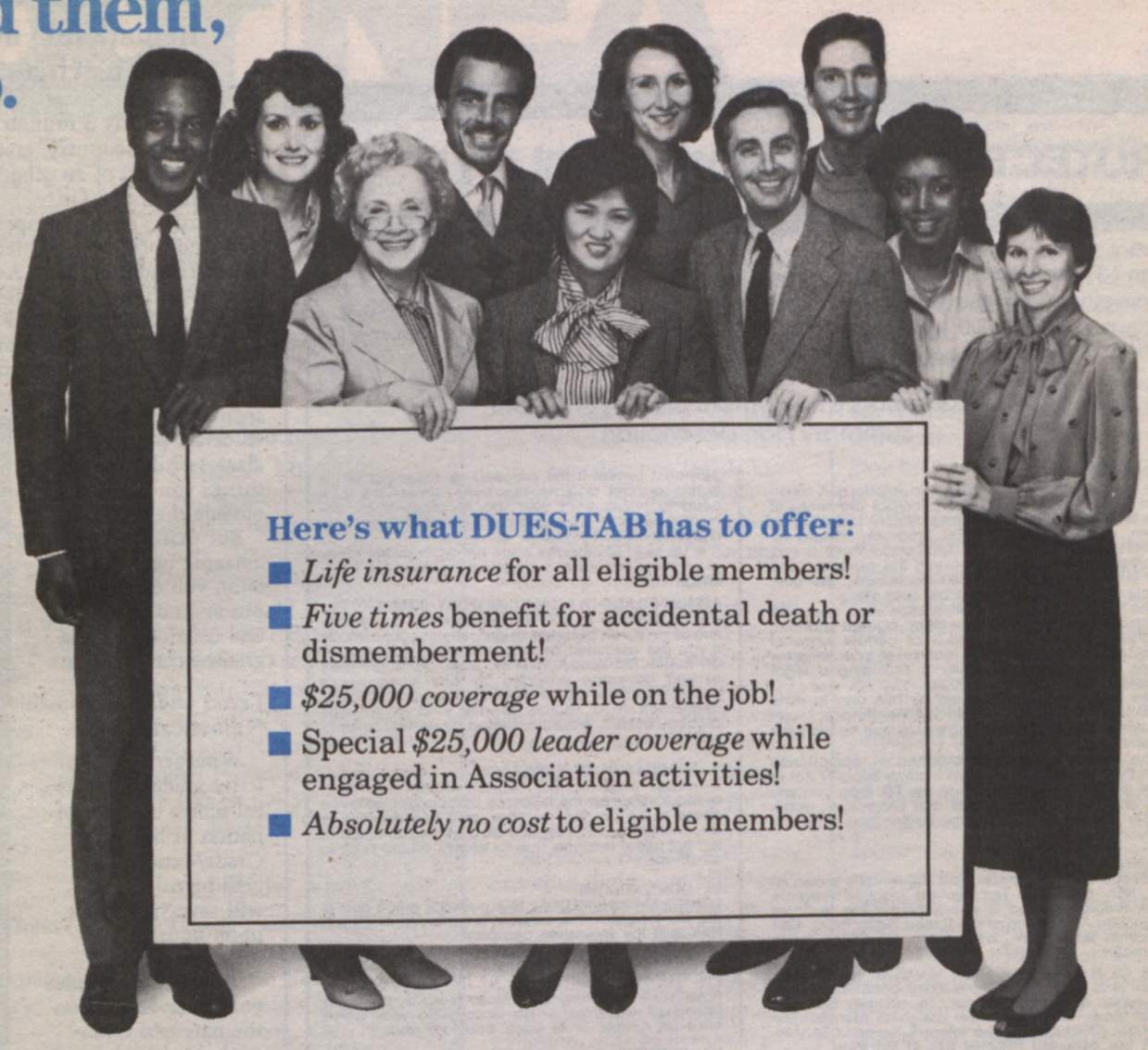
If you lost your personalized DUES-TAB materials, or never received them, here's what to do.

If you're an Active, Educational Support or Life member who is actively employed in the field of education, you are eligible for NEA DUES-TAB No-Cost Insurance. We sent each eligible member a personalized DUES-TAB mailing in October that included a certification form along with valuable information. Those of you who have a certification form at home, but haven't sent it in yet, please take a few moments to fill out and send in your certification form right now and start your DUES-TAB coverage today!

If you lost or never received your DUES-TAB package, simply send your name, address, member classification (Active, Educational Support or Life), Social Security number and signature to:

NEA Special Services
51 Monroe Street, Suite 200
Rockville, Maryland 20850

As long as you are an eligible member, your coverage will begin immediately. Your official certificate of insurance will be issued in a later edition of *NEA Today*.



Here's what DUES-TAB has to offer:

- *Life insurance* for all eligible members!
- *Five times* benefit for accidental death or dismemberment!
- *$25,000 coverage* while on the job!
- Special *$25,000 leader coverage* while engaged in Association activities!
- *Absolutely no cost* to eligible members!

NEA DUES TAB

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UNIFIED SPECIAL SERVICES

NEA...Working for you

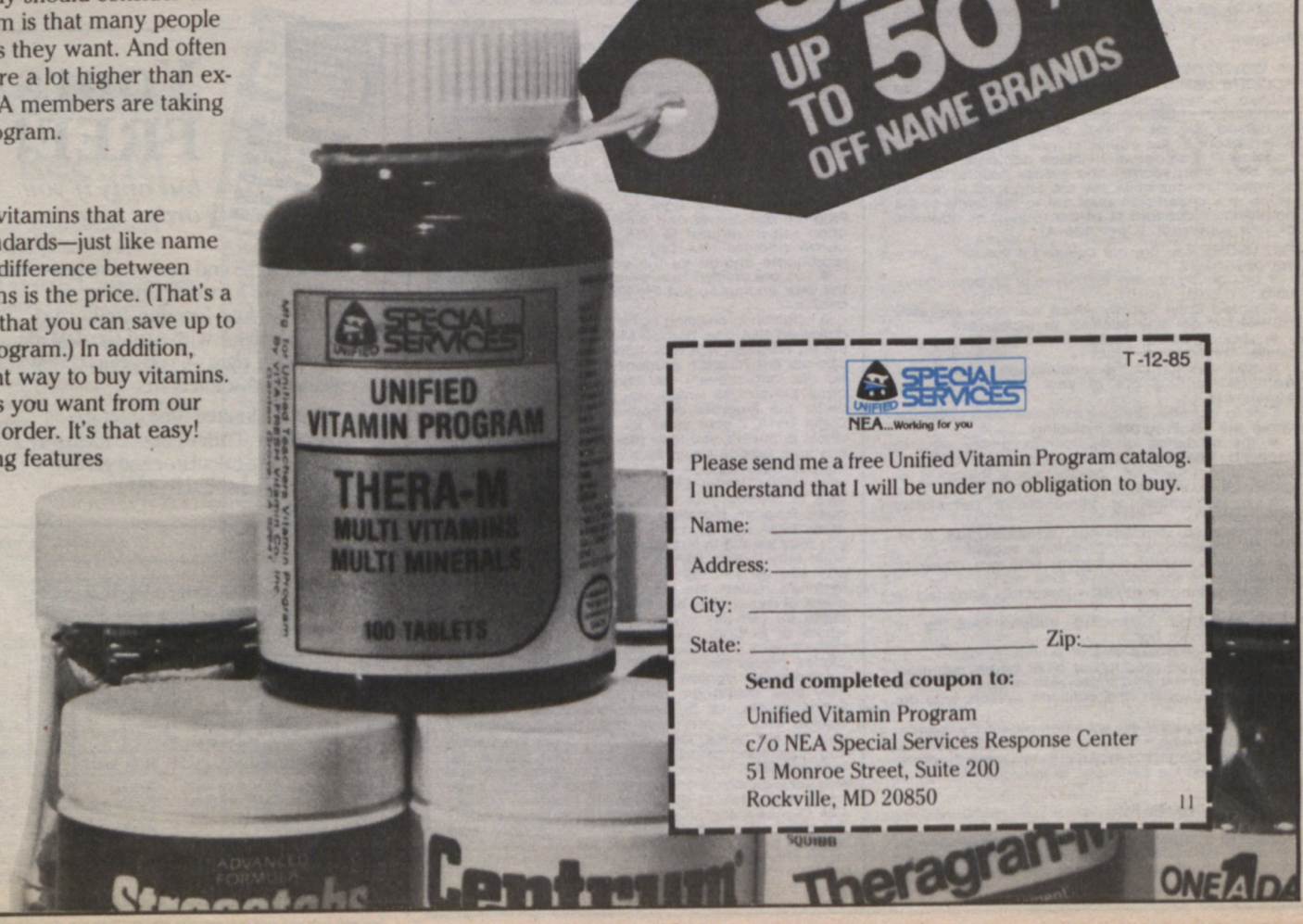
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HEALTHY SAVINGS WITH THE UNIFIED VITAMIN PROGRAM

The world today can be a very hectic place. Busy schedules don't always allow time for nutritionally complete meals; and daily stresses can rob the body of essential vitamins and minerals. As a result, just about everybody should consider taking vitamin supplements. The problem is that many people have a hard time finding the vitamins they want. And often when they do find them, the prices are a lot higher than expected. That's exactly why many NEA members are taking advantage of the Unified Vitamin Program.

QUALITY. PRICE. CONVENIENCE.

The Unified Vitamin Program offers vitamins that are formulated to the highest quality standards—just like name brands. In fact, many times the only difference between our vitamins and name brand vitamins is the price. (That's a *major* difference when you consider that you can save up to 50% by using the Unified Vitamin Program.) In addition, there's never been a more convenient way to buy vitamins. All you have to do is choose the ones you want from our extensive catalog and phone in your order. It's that easy! Here's a quick list of the other exciting features of the Unified Vitamin Program:

- Satisfaction unconditionally guaranteed for 30 days, or your money will be refunded in full.
- Toll-free number to place orders.
- Prompt order processing.
- A full selection of timed release formulas.
- PAK-ETS—a unique pre-packaged combination of multivitamins and multiminerals.



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Please send me a free Unified Vitamin Program catalog. I understand that I will be under no obligation to buy.

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c/o NEA Special Services Response Center
51 Monroe Street, Suite 200
Rockville, MD 20850

11

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Getting the Most from Your HEALTH INSURANCE

Understanding Coordination Of Benefits

If you and your spouse are both employed, you may find yourselves covered by two group health insurance policies providing similar benefits. The coordination-of-benefits (C.O.B.) clause in your policies prevents insurance payments from exceeding 100 percent of your covered expenses. This provision not only keeps insured persons from profiting from an illness but also helps keep down the cost of health care.

Under the C.O.B. clause, if you receive a medical service that's covered by both policies, one insurance company will coordinate benefit payments with the other. One company will pay its full benefit as the "primary carrier," and the other will pay secondary ones as the "secondary carrier." The combined payments usually mean 100 percent of the charges are covered.

If your employer isn't paying all your insurance costs, or if you could substitute other benefits for insurance coverage, you're better off without duplicate insurance. But if you can't avoid it, at least save yourself time by knowing which carrier is primary—that's the one to submit your claim to first. These three rules apply to most policies:

► If a group policy does *not* have a C.O.B. provision, then it is primary.

► If both policies have C.O.B., your employer's policy is the primary carrier; your spouse's policy, which covers you as a dependent, is "secondary."

► If the patient is a dependent child covered under both contracts, the father's contract is often primary.

Second Opinion?

Getting the opinion of a second doctor before undergoing surgery has always made good medical sense. But these days it makes excellent financial sense as well.

More and more health insurance policies will not pay full benefits for certain operations unless you've first sought a second opinion. This is a smart move by the insurance companies, because it helps prevent needless operations and keeps health care costs down for all of us.

As a consumer, however, you need to know whether you'll be required to get a second opinion. Check now: the day your doctor says you need surgery, you probably won't feel like poring over your insurance policy.

Do You Need Supplemental Insurance?

Ideally, you should be getting all your health insurance coverage through one complete policy. That keeps paperwork to a minimum—and lessens the chance for overlaps or gaps in coverage. Unfortunately, not everyone has access to health insurance that suits them exactly. If your basic policy doesn't cover all your needs, it makes sense to consider buying *supplemental* insurance.

But supplemental health insurance can be confusing. Many types are available, and some go under several different names. You need to know what you're buying and how it fits in with your other coverage.

Here are the most popular forms of supplemental insurance:

► *In-hospital or hospital indemnity policies.* These pay a set amount for every day you're hospitalized, varying from $20 a day up to $200 or more. The money can be helpful in covering the nonmedical costs of hospitalization—travel, long-distance telephone calls, day care for the children—but should not be confused with basic hospitalization insurance, which pays for the costs of your treatment. Also, since these plans pay only while you're in the hospital, they're not a substitute for disability insurance protection.

► *Excess major medical or catastrophic health insurance.* These policies begin paying benefits only after you and your regular health insurance have already paid a substantial amount—typically $25,000 or more. They can continue covering you long after your regular coverage has run out: many provide $1,000,000 or more of protection.

Since most people never file a claim under this kind of policy, the premiums are quite low. Experts counsel that if your regular health insurance doesn't provide a maximum coverage of at least $250,000, you should consider buying such protection.

► *Supplemental major medical insurance.* Most health insurance policies require that you pay a set "deductible" amount of your medical expenses yearly, or a certain share of all costs, or both. If your insurance doesn't have a "stop-loss" feature that limits the total amount of money you could pay out of pocket, a supplemental major medical policy can help by paying for some or all of the items not covered by your regular policy.

When considering a supplemental policy, first decide how much money you could afford to pay on your own—the more risk you're willing to accept, the lower your overall insurance costs will be. Then check carefully to see how well the supplemental policy "fits" into your existing coverage. As in buying clothes, avoid gaps or overlaps.

► *Medicare supplements.* When you're old enough to sign up for Medicare, don't expect the same degree of coverage you enjoyed under your old health insurance. According to one retirement expert, Medicare pays less than 40 percent of the average senior citizen's medical bills. If you don't want to deplete your savings, he recommends, consider some sort of Medicare supplement. Don't *over*insure, though: it's estimated that 23 percent of those over 65 waste money by having two or more private policies with overlapping coverage. (*See story above on "Coordination of Benefits."*)

► *Dread disease supplements.* These policies are designed to provide extra money for the treatment of certain costly diseases, such as cancer or strokes. Often, however, they duplicate coverage that your existing insurance provides. Experts advise making sure your medical insurance is adequate no matter what your health problem, rather than buying your insurance one disease at a time.

Finally, don't forget to check into Association-sponsored supplemental health plans. They offer attractive group rates—and have been carefully researched for your protection.

For a free copy of the newly updated, 48-page NEA consumer guide to health insurance, write to the NEA Special Services Response Center. The address is 51 Monroe St., Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850.

Letters

Mid-Career Switches

I read with interest the cover story in the November *NEA Today*, as I too left another career to enter the teaching profession.

After completing a degree in statistics, I found that I missed the daily interaction with students in the undergraduate math classes I had taught. Having returned to the mathematics classrooom, I'm finding on a daily basis that teaching affords both the excitement and the challenge I was seeking.

Wyatt Tustin
Helena, Montana

Parental Expectations

Yes, as your November photo story suggests, today's parents *are* different. They suffer from the same kind of "me" syndrome that afflicts their children.

They want discipline in the schools, but they don't want *their* son or daughter disciplined. They want their child taught well, but they take the child out of school for any reason whatever: vacations, beauty pageants, baby-sitting, shopping. They want their child in honors sections, but complain loudly when honors work is demanded. And they certify sickness when their child misses school because he or she was up late watching TV.

There are far too many students and parents who believe that the school week consists of only four days. Seeing to it that kids are in school so they can be taught is the parents' responsibility—not the schools', not the teachers'. Only when students and parents see education as a three-dimensional effort will our nation's public schools improve.

Edwin Xavier Travers
Sandy Spring, Maryland

This morning I walked out to my car for an errand just as most of the students were coming into the building. Many were getting off buses, but quite a few others were being dropped off in the parking lot from large Chrysler sedans, new minivans, Mazda RX's, and large station wagons. I thought to myself, "These people bring their kids to school in Cadillacs to get a 'free' public education?"

Because of a large enrollment, our middle school, in the affluent Cottonwood Heights/Butlerville area of Salt Lake City, does have a larger budget than many others, and our administrators have assembled a very good faculty over the years. But in spite of the superb efforts of that faculty, the students still do not receive the kind of education their parents are expecting.

They expect an education much like private schools and tutors provide, and they continually pressure our staff to fulfill those expectations in spite of our overcrowding and other traditional limitations. I think these parents have the money to provide the kind of education they expect, but the public school system cannot deliver it—nor would it ever in its existing composition.

The detractors of free public education are stealing the show. They talk of vouchers and tax rebates: we ought to be leading those dialogs. But we are not yet at the point of comprehensive and collective dialog among educators.

We are not hearing enough from the classroom teachers, nor providing them enough time or the proper forums to express themselves thoughtfully. Local administrators preempt conference leave days; school boards restrict personal leave days; the PTA fights effective teacher substitute policies; and parents refuse to increase their tax load to continue financing the public school system because they dimly perceive its inadequacies.

I see a ring of educators circling the globe, each pointing the finger of blame at the other. No wonder we have lost the public's respect.

Wilbur L. Pearson, Jr.
Salt Lake City, Utah

Teacher Attendance

Should school districts reward teachers for good attendance? Not on your life! Mr. Freiler ("Debate," Oct.) confuses conduct with luck. Should he have been so unfortunate as to contract a long-term illness or need life-saving surgery, he'd have seen his sick days dwindle remarkably quickly.

As a physical education teacher, he also worked a large part of his day outdoors. Otherwise he might have found himself saddled with a group of coughing and sneezing children. Needless to say, our schools are not all well heated, well ventilated, and sanitized.

Mr. Freiler appears to be abysmally ignorant of methods of disease transmittal, as well as the various factors that influence teacher absenteeism.

Even teachers who eat sensibly, exercise regularly, and in general do not abuse their bodies can very quickly be caught up in an illness that would adversely affect their sick leave bank.

Theodore J. Good
East Stroudsburg, Penn.

During the first semester of last year, our high school staff of 17 teachers missed only 7¼ days. During the entire year we missed only 18¾ days total. This figures out to an absentee rate of 5/10 of 1 percent for the first semester and 7/10 of 1 percent for the entire year.

We were awarded certificates for our record-setting performance, plus a written commendation from our principal, who speculated about the factors behind our super attendance: "You are dedicated people...you are just plain healthy...you are too busy to be ill...and maybe...just plain luck."

We thought other teachers might be interested in hearing about our record.

Carol Rhodes
Harmony, Minnesota

The Write Stuff

On behalf of many of the journalism educators in the country, thank you for the two stories on journalism teachers in the October *NEA Today*. Many times we liberal and fine arts teachers are forgotten because there are only one or two of us in a school. The English and math teachers can always get together to talk about their problems, but many journalism, art, and drama teachers don't have anyone else to discuss their concerns with.

It's good to know that someone other than just our own journalism education organizations recognizes our awards and our problems.

Randy Vonderheid
DeSoto, Texas

Prevention, Not Cure?

Since your October article on the dropout problem cites illiteracy as a major reason for students' leaving school before graduation, it would seem that NEA's new Operation Rescue should look closely at the work being done by the Orton Society and the Slingerland Institute, as featured in the dyslexia article elsewhere in your October issue.

I feel fortunate to have been taught by Dr. Mary Lee Enfield and by those who follow her methods. Using a multisensory approach in my first grade classroom has created a significant change in reading scores over a five-year period.

With the current recommendation for intensive phonics in *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, primary teachers and administrators would do well to consider using the Slingerland methodology in terms of preventing rather than curing reading disabilities.

Grace S. Vyduna
McHenry, Illinois

Ending Child Abuse

I was encouraged to read about the child abuse programs funded by NEA grants ("Human Rights," Oct.). Educators have the unique and potent opportunity to recognize abused children and intervene in their lives. The more we develop our skills in dealing with these problems, the more the learning connection can be mended for abused children.

Don Glabe
Tacoma, Washington

Breaking Tradition

I read with interest your October "People" item on George Lindrum and his steps to "integrate" home economics. As a teacher of primary students for 15 years and as my school's first male first grade teacher, I've shared the challenges of discrimination and stereotyping.

Volumes have been written about women and blacks, but what about the contribution that others have made by crossing those "traditional" lines in the opposite direction?

Thanks for the boost, George!

Jim McKinney
Oak Harbor, Washington

Three Cheers

In an era when secondary science teachers have difficulty keeping up with changing theories and rapid advances in instrumentation, Martin Marietta Laboratories in Baltimore County, Md., is to be commended for offering summer employment to teachers.

Five of us were hired as research associates with a compensation rate equal to our biweekly teaching salaries. We were able to earn while learning much more than one could in most college courses. Spending 40 hours-plus per week working closely with the research scientists and technicians at the Labs amounted to total immersion in the process of science at its cutting edge.

The entire experience was exciting, rejuvenating, and rewarding in every way. The knowledge and enthusiasm I took back to my students in September were immeasurable. I hope other research laboratories will follow Martin Marietta's lead and give similar opportunities to teachers across the country.

John C. Foertsch
Baltimore County, Maryland

Wanted: Videos

My sixth grade students and I are in our second year of producing a magazine-format TV show by and about kids for our local cable station. It's called *Lights, Camera, Kids*.

We'd like to exchange ½-inch videotapes with other middle schools, especially tapes showing the kids involved in activities that highlight something unique to their geo graphic area.

Len Radjewski
Anchor Bay Middle School
51880 Washington
New Baltimore, MI 48047

Timely Suggestion

What do computers, hospitals, police stations, VCRs, the military, and the world (minus the U.S.) have in common?

They all use the 24-hour clock. At three international teacher conferences I was embarrassed because all the nations present had agendas published using the 24-hour format, while the U.S. fumbled with the a.m.'s and p.m.'s.

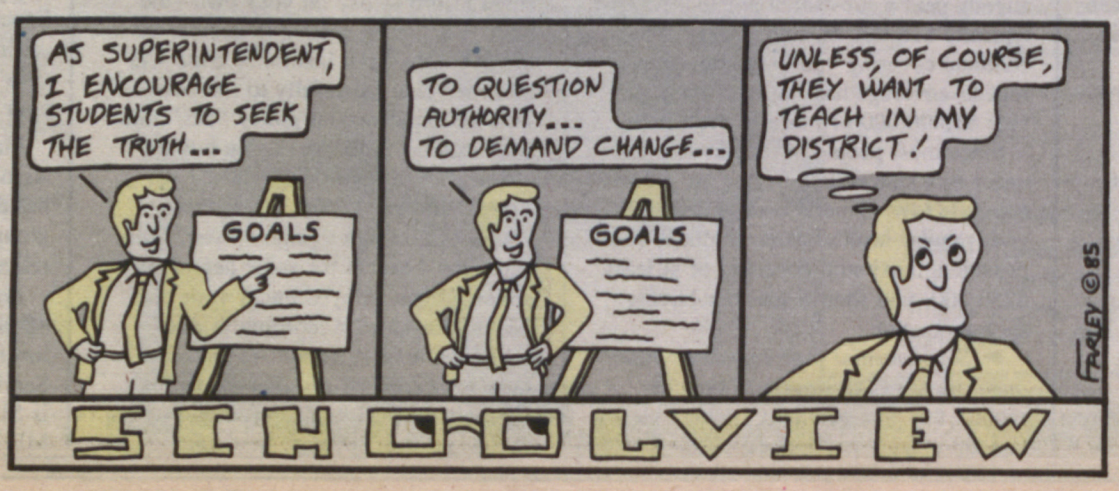
As teachers we perpetuate the culture and we change the culture. Dear friends, it's time to let the a.m.'s and p.m.'s pass with the pickle barrel and the pot-bellied stove! If we publish schedules with the 24-hour format, the nation will follow.

James D. DeLoach
Stockton, California

Help Shape NEA Policy

The current NEA resolutions, as revised by delegates to last summer's Representative Assembly and printed in the back of the 1985-86 *Today's Education*, spell out the Association's opinion, intent, belief, or position on over 200 issues.

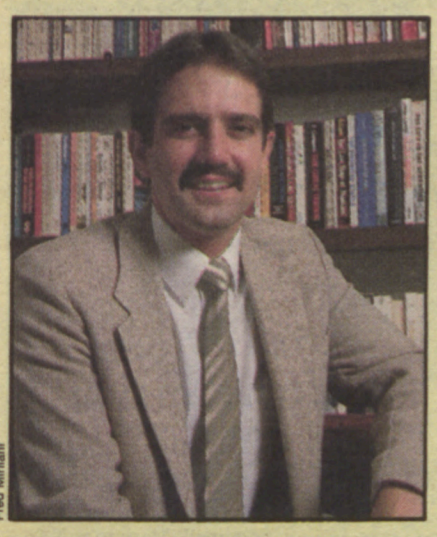
The Resolutions Committee will be meeting in March to consider suggestions for ways the resolutions should be amended by the 1986 Representative Assembly. If you'd like to propose a revision, please send your suggestion to the Committee's staff contact, Frank Masters at NEA Center, by February 1—or get in touch with your representative(s) on the Committee, in care of your state Association.


AS SUPERINTENDENT, I ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SEEK THE TRUTH...
GOALS
TO QUESTION AUTHORITY... TO DEMAND CHANGE...
GOALS
UNLESS, OF COURSE, THEY WANT TO TEACH IN MY DISTRICT!
FARLEY ©85
SCHOOLVIEW

What's *your* opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Have our schools been oversold on computers?



Fred Mirlani

YES

John Brande is a nine-year veteran social studies teacher, currently teaching at Wayland (Mass.) High School. His life hasn't escaped the lure of computer technology—besides losing some of his best friends to personal computers, one of his major interests is using a computer synthesizer to compose popular music.

Take a handful of computer manufacturers with a zealous marketing approach. Combine that with educators' instinct to jump on the latest education technology bandwagon. The result is an overemphasis on "computer literacy," the definition of which can't even be agreed upon.

By employing the sacred term *literacy*, ad agencies and marketing departments have brilliantly manipulated the public into believing that computer skills are as essential as reading skills. Witness the rash of ads cleverly suggesting the extent to which computer training gives students an important edge in life.

A recent experience with a computer buff helped me put computer literacy into perspective. Justin, the son of a friend, took me into his computer room, loaded a disk, and proceeded to show me how to use the complicated information on the screen.

I was going to ask him about computer literacy courses at his school, but I didn't. Justin is four years old.

Rather than intimidate me, this experience demonstrated how easily people can learn to use this technology. Familiarity with a microcomputer isn't limited to four-year-old overachievers—it's possible for anyone who can read on a junior high school level. All it takes is one day at a terminal with a booklet on a computer language like BASIC or LOGO.

Those who are truly computer literate have spent hundreds of hours programming in one of the computer languages. Their expertise—which is only needed for pursuing a few careers—can't be considered a prerequisite for being well educated. As a panel of six computer teachers agreed more than two years ago in NEA's *Today's Education*, "Two currently popular ideas—literacy as an end in itself and programming for all students—are becoming obsolete...most programming courses will be vocational."

If basic computer skills can be easily acquired after a few hours of instruction, doesn't it follow that computer literacy doesn't belong in the general curriculum?

Educators have to make tough choices about what should get emphasized in the school day. We have the responsiblity to teach critical thinking skills: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The use of microcomputers doesn't help develop these skills. Computer-in-the-classroom advocates admit that current educational software isn't sufficiently challenging. Most programs emphasize low-level cognitive skills (knowledge and comprehension) and aren't conducive to high-level thinking.

The most intellectually beneficial activity—complicated programming that helps develop abstract thinking skills—rarely takes place in schools. Ironically, as software becomes "better" (more sophisticated and efficient), students will have less need to do their own thinking.

Unless we're careful, today's public schools will produce a generation of computer bureaucrats who will gaze vacuously at the screens before them, believing what they see and doing what they're told. Instead of a nation attuned to political, scientific, and ethical issues, we are slowly developing a population of obsequious managers.

To prevent that from happening, we as educators must apply some discrimination and not swallow hook, line, and sinker the latest hype about what's good for our classrooms. Let's not continue letting new technology cause us to lose perspective on what good education is.

Craig Kojima

NO

Barbara Kagan heads the computer center at Moanalua High School in Honolulu. As a math/computer science teacher in 1983, she received one of the first Presidential awards for excellence in mathematics teaching. Her argument below was the first manuscript ever sent electronically to **NEA Today.**

If computers have been oversold, then perhaps one should ask who's done the overbuying. Sandy Wagner, who founded Computer-Using Educators (CUE), contends that "computers have been oversold only to those who believed that they could work miracles without proper integration, training, and planning that should accompany any educational innovation."

The personal computer industry is still in its infancy; the training and planning are not yet fully in place. Moreover, prior to learning how to use computers to extend the boundaries of the classroom and to offer new approaches to learning, teachers must have training to become comfortable users of computers in their own lives. Only after they have learned what a computer can do can teachers pass on this experience to their students.

"If anything, educators have been *undersold* on the need to use computers as applications tools rather than as expensive teaching machines," states Bruce Fredrickson, who founded Educational Consulting Associates and the Learning Institute. "Computers must be used to help with those tasks that they can do better or more efficiently than traditional means of instruction."

At my school, we've long advocated the use of a word processor in writing classes, because computers make students more willing to revise and edit, to rewrite and rearrange—formidable tasks when done with paper and pencil. Furthermore, students using computers are inclined to write more.

Entire language arts classes—and their teachers—come to the computer resource center for word processing instruction. After a recent two-week bout with the word processor, students had nothing but praise for it. "It makes writing a fun task" and "the words flowed easier" were typical comments.

One senior recognized word processing as the powerful tool it is for enhancing self-expression. "It helped me to actually write better," he reported. "I was not afraid of just writing what was on my mind, because I knew I could correct it later. I could punch in many scrambled ideas and use the word processor to join them into understandable paragraphs. The word processor made me feel more comfortable with writing."

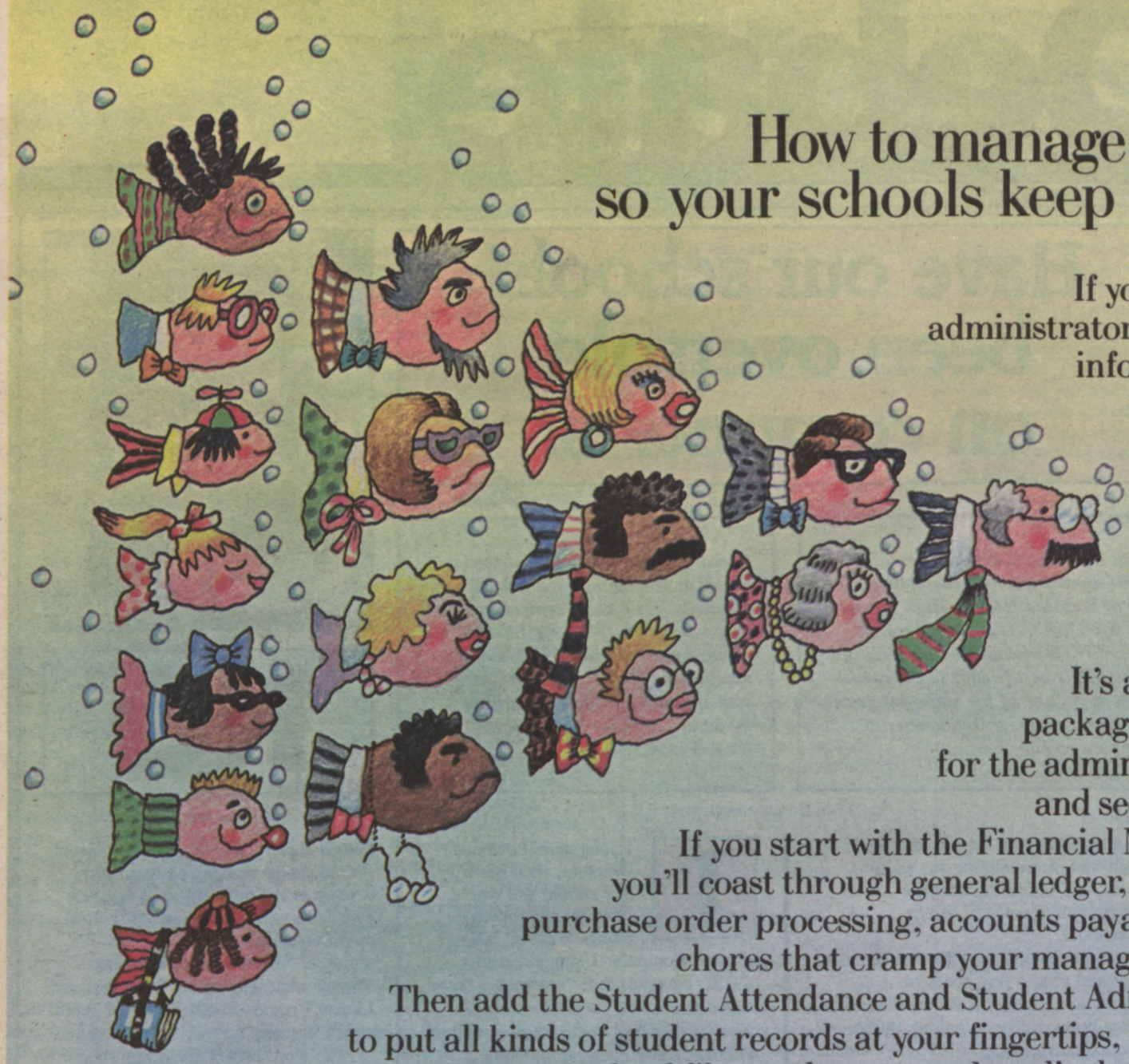
But it's not just language arts lessons that can be revitalized through computer use. Our science students are encouraged to use graphing and spreadsheet programs when they do their lab reports.

Gail Tamaribuchi, a social studies teacher at my school, became a computer advocate when she noted her students' increased interest and enthusiasm after they used a computerized economics simulation called the "Jeans Factory."

Claims Tamaribuchi, "I am now a firm believer that computers can and should be used to expand students' experience and perspective—to let them apply their knowledge to real, lifelike situations in a way unparalleled in the traditional classroom mode."

Software that once required technically oriented users is being replaced with cost-effective, easy-to-use applications programs that even elementary school students can use. I know of fifth and sixth graders in Seattle and St. Louis who use data base management programs to create data files. Such a feat would have been unheard of just a few years ago.

I submit that computers have not been oversold. With computers, the potential for increased creativity in the classroom is unlimited. Furthermore, computers can add another dimension to education by enhancing learning.



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